



30 Mistakes Startup Founders Make in Pitch Decks

Discover where founders screw up their pitch decks most often

Source: Confluence.VC Weekly
- Curated by Wen Zhang





Design and Visual Presentation Mistakes

- **Rectangular Logos:** Avoid using rectangular logos; opt for square or circular designs for better visual appeal.
- **Using ALL CAPS:** Refrain from using all caps to describe your business; rely on compelling content instead.
- **Excessive Colors:** Limit the color palette in your design to maintain simplicity and professionalism.
- **Complex Slide Designs:** Simplify slide designs to avoid clutter and ensure clear communication.
- **Formal Business Names in Branding:** Exclude formalities like “Co.”, “Inc.”, “LLC”, or “DBA” in pitches.



Content and Structure Mistakes

- **Overly Long Descriptions:** Keep business descriptions to one sentence for clarity and conciseness.
- **Text-Heavy Slides:** Minimize text in slides; use visuals and bullet points for impact.
- **Too Many Slides:** Aim for 15-20 slides to maintain engagement and coherence.
- **Delayed Problem Identification:** Introduce the problem early in the presentation for immediate context.
- **Faceless Team Slides:** Include team member photos to personalize and add credibility.
- **Overuse of Buzzwords:** Avoid jargon; use clear, straightforward language.



- **Unclear Traction:** Be transparent about your revenue status and growth.
- **Hidden Product:** Showcase your product prominently in the pitch.
- **Unaddressed Business Risks:** Acknowledge and discuss potential risks upfront.
- **Lack of Investor Research:** Research your investors to tailor the pitch and show preparedness.
- **Vague Use of Funds:** Clearly outline how the raised funds will be utilized.
- **No Follow-Up:** Always follow up post-meeting to maintain interest and momentum.
- **Long Pitch Decks:** Keep the pitch deck concise; focus on key points.
- **Ineffective Problem Slide:** Ensure the problem slide is data-backed and specific.



Differentiation and Value Proposition Mistakes

- **Ignoring Competitors:** Acknowledge competitors; show how your business is different.
- **Broad Target Market:** Focus on a niche market initially for effective customer acquisition.
- **Lack of Differentiation:** Clearly articulate your unique value proposition.



Market Analysis and Customer Strategy Mistakes

- **Overstating Market Size:** Avoid claiming a small percentage of a large market; be realistic in market sizing.
- **Unjustified Key Assumptions:** Back up all claims and assumptions with data and research.
- **Unrealistic Goals:** Set ambitious yet achievable goals; avoid overestimation.
- **No Customer Acquisition Strategy:** Include a clear customer acquisition plan with explored channels and results.
- **Poor Differentiation in Market Analysis:** Ensure your market analysis clearly differentiates your business from competitors.