



# Pitch deck perfection.

5 sections & 10 slides to  
sculpt your funding story

A wise investor once said that inside every 67-page pitch deck is **a useful one-pager** struggling to get out.

**Nobody likes their time  
wasted.**

The average human attention  
span is just eight seconds —  
shorter than a fish!

And DocSend found that  
investors spend just 3:44 on a  
pitch deck.

That's why a pitch deck is only meant to **stimulate interest and further conversation.**

Not to convey every detailed aspect of your nonprofit or new idea.



If your overview deck is well received, you can follow up with more detailed info.

But if the funder loses interest in this critical first impression?  
**Game over.**

This pitch deck format is specifically designed for **growth-stage** nonprofits and social enterprises.

It's based on story arc wisdom and venture capital best practices.

# Remember:



**5 sections**



**10 slides**



**Conversations vs.  
presentations**

# 1. The problem

Open with a bang: 1–2 pages about the issue at hand. Get the audience leaning in, understanding why this work matters, and triggering their primal instinct to either thrive or survive.

Important: this piece is *not* about your organization!

## 2. Solution or mission

With the proper framing in place, spend 2–3 pages explaining your solution, idea, or mission.

The *rule of three* can work well here, like three interventions or a three-phase process. Best would be a graphic that visually illustrates your work.

## 3. Evidence & about

Next, give the audience confidence your organization can execute well.

This piece can include your impact results. Some typical *about us* language. Or possibly the partners or funders you've worked with so far — to add social proof.

## 4. Vision

The final step before the ask is telling the audience where you're headed. And getting them excited about joining the journey ahead.

Ideal for this element is the 10-year target or vision statement from your theory of change.

## 5. Call-to-action

Finally, it's time to call the audience to action. Make the ask. Give them contact information. Prompt with a question.

This is your chance to create urgency — why *now* is the time and exactly what they can do to join you and your cause.



**But what about everything else?**

Put it in the appendix. Or send it later by email. Don't crowd the main message and delay the back-and-forth dialogue.

People might give you a few minutes of **time**. But, they likely won't give you a few minutes of their undivided **attention**.

There are probably 100 reasons why your organization is great. But funders can only remember a few after a short pitch.

So if you just communicate your main points clearly, you'll do better than most.

**You should have one main pitch deck.**

But going back to your positioning strategy, you can slightly customize the deck for each of your three priority audiences.

And finally: your pitch deck should have a **500-word limit**.

Because it's not meant for the audience to read verbatim while you speak.

If a foundation's eyes are glued to your slides — not you — you've lost their engagement.

So this deck exists to amplify your story. Not to tell it.

Not to mention, presenting is a tool of **swaying**, while conversing is a tool of **weighing**.

That's why this deck is certainly not here to convince.

Because presentations build buying resistance, while conversations lower it.

## AirBed&Breakfast

Book rooms with locals, rather than hotels.


### **Don't think it's possible?**

Airbnb's first (and famous) pitch deck was only 300 words. It led to an easy \$615k seed round with another \$7.2M a year later.

*“A pitch should have  
10 slides, last no more than  
20 minutes, and contain no  
font smaller than 30 points.  
This impossibly low  
number forces you to  
concentrate on the  
absolute essentials.”*

— Guy Kawasaki

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