



Pre-Seed and Seed Slide Map

Slide	Slide Story
Cover	Company name, and one line that says exactly what you do and who you do it for.
Your Big Vision	Start big. The future you are betting on and how your product fits, or why the status quo sucks and you are uniquely qualified to fix it.
Problem (1 to 2 slides)	Who has the problem, what it costs them, and the data that sizes the pain. Be specific: which department owns the budget, which one feels the pain, and when the problem turns urgent. A problem statement any competitor could use tells an investor nothing about you.
Status Quo	What buyers do today and why it falls short.
Why Us (Team)	Sits here on purpose, directly after the problem and status quo. Founders, relevant background, and one sentence on why this team has lived inside the problem. Investors read everything that follows as more credible once they trust the source. List angels and advisors only when the name matters in your category.
Solution (2 to 3 slides)	How the product works: what it creates, what data it runs on, and what it produces.
Traction	Closed customers, design partners, and late stage pipeline on one slide. Pre-product companies show customer conversations: who you met, what they said, and what they committed to. Investors treat selling before the product exists as one of the strongest signals at this stage. Show what you have done with the money raised so far, including what you built, who you signed, and how lean the team stayed. Expect investors to ask for the full pipeline in the data room.
Market	Bottoms up math. Number of buyers multiplied by average spend, with the two inputs shown. Add market comps when the category is unfamiliar. Public market caps of the incumbents you are displacing show an investor the size of the opportunity faster than a top down analyst chart.

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Why Now	What changed in the last 24 months that makes the business possible now, whether in the market or in what technology can do. Be specific, since “AI” on its own does not explain why the business works now.
Unfair Advantage	Distribution, proprietary data, technology, or a specific person. Title the slide plainly and put the advantage in the headline, so an investor sees it in the first few minutes of the meeting.
The Ask (optional)	Many pre-seed investors advise leaving round size off the deck, on the logic that most founders carry two plans and a printed number can screen you out of a fund whose minimum check is larger than your stated raise. Our recommendation: leave the number out of the send-ahead deck, bring it to the meeting, and have both plans ready.
Appendix	Financial model and assumptions, unit economic assumptions, full pipeline, product detail, technical architecture, hiring plan, security and compliance. <i>Suggested financials:</i> <i>Pre-seed: Mostly a headcount plan, presented as financials:</i> • Hiring plan: roles, sequence, rough timing • Monthly burn now, projected burn after the raise, and runway in months • An 18 to 24 month operating plan at quarterly granularity showing headcount, burn, and cash balance • Pricing hypothesis with the reasoning behind it, labeled as a hypothesis <i>Seed: Same material with firmer numbers, plus:</i> • Revenue to date by month, with contracted and recognized shown separately • Actual gross margin with COGS broken out. For anything AI-touching, inference cost gets its own line, because investors will ask what happens to margin at scale. • Signed ACVs: range, average, and how many data points you have • Pipeline value by stage • A 24-month plan with the milestone this round funds marked on it

A one-pager can replace the deck at pre-seed. Structure: mission in one sentence, team and credentials in three lines, the insight, the bets you are making, the problem in one sentence, progress, initial go to market, competition, market. Works when the team is strong and the insight is sharp.

Data Room

- Deck, and the one-pager if you built one
- Cap table, including the SAFE and note stack
- Operating model covering 18 to 24 months, built around the hiring plan
- Traction in raw form: signed contracts, LOIs, pilot agreements, and the current pipeline list
- Product roadmap, next 12 months
- Team bios
- Founder references, and any customers willing to take a call
- Incorporation documents and corporate records
- Founder IP assignments, plus contractor agreements for everyone who has touched code or design

Production Standards

Build two versions from one file.

The send-ahead version has to stand on its own, so its slides include more text. The live version strips back to a headline and one visual per slide so attention stays on the founder. Build the send-ahead deck first and cut down from it.

Write for a phone screen.

Investors read decks on transit, in five minute gaps, at thumbnail size. Put the point of each slide in its headline.

Write for machine reading.

A growing share of inbound decks get scored by AI before a person opens them. Keep headlines and body copy as live text, since text baked into an image can't be read by those tools, and name the category explicitly somewhere in the first three slides.

Delivery format.

PDF or DocSend. DocSend adds view tracking, which tells you who opened the deck, how long they spent, and whether it was forwarded.

Do not ask for an NDA.

Investors will not sign one at the deck stage and the request reads as a red flag. NDAs become reasonable several meetings in, around protectable technical detail.

Design is leverage.

The founder owns the narrative, and design helps it land cleanly and quickly, which matters most when the raise is large or the founder wants it to close fast.