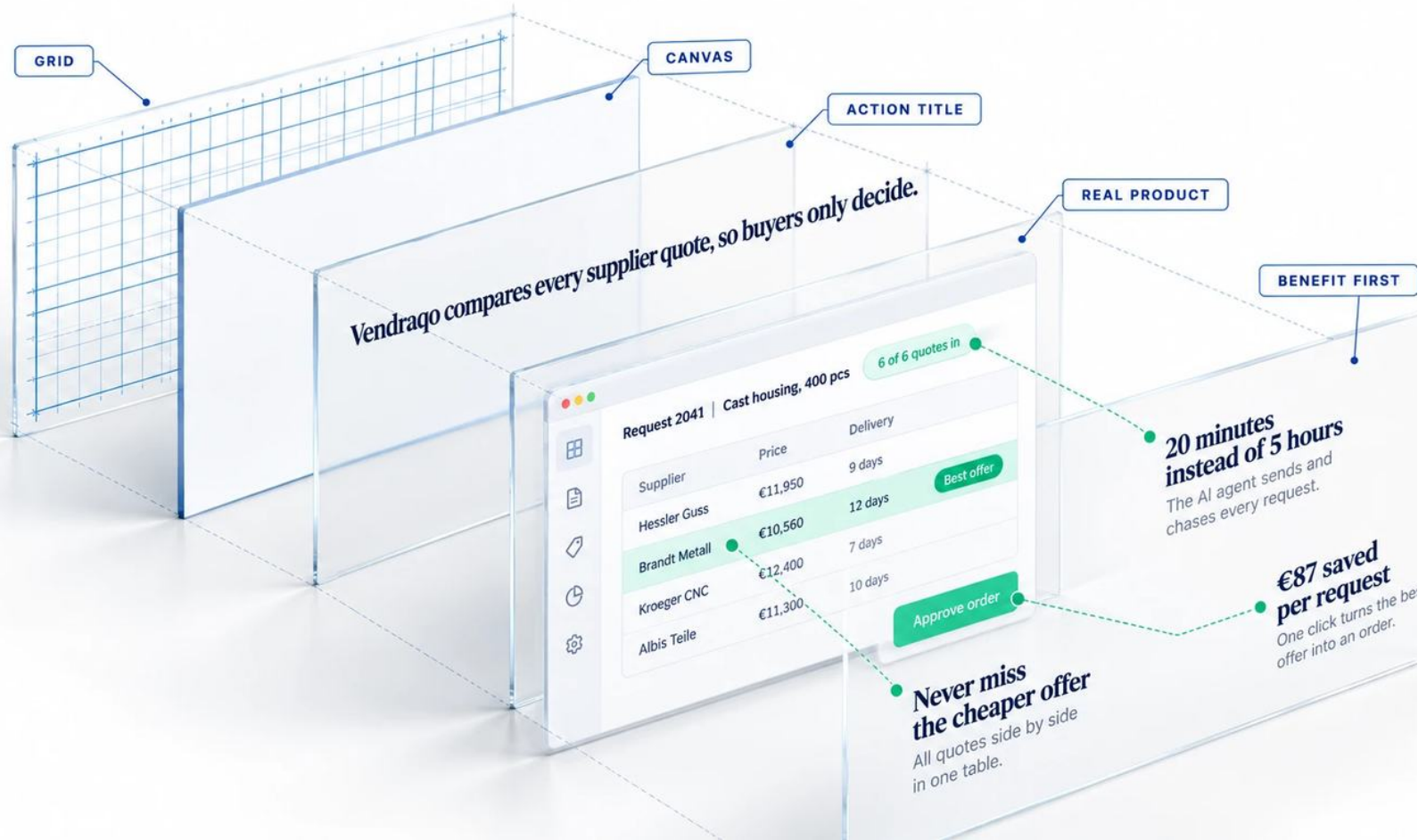
The Ultimate Pitch Deck Guide

Great pitch decks follow clear rules. This guide shows you every one, so you get the funding.

BUILT FROM **5,000+** PITCH DECK REVIEWS

AddedVal.io
by startupdetector



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is a tool, not a book: keep it open while you build your deck.

DO and DON'T

✓ DO | what makes it work

✗ DON'T | what goes wrong

Every example is marked. The label always names what makes it good or what goes wrong.

Numbered callouts

1 1

A number on an example points to the explanation right below it. Blue explains a strength, red a mistake.

What investors should think

I want to talk to them now.

Every slide chapter starts with the one thought your slide must trigger.

Chapter registers

The colored tab on the page edge shows the chapter, so you can find it on the closed book.

How to read it

Read once, front to back

Before you start — p. 4 — Your deck's job, your free deck

Build process — p. 10 — Facts, story, slides

The rules — p. 15 — Titles, design, numbers, psychology

While you build

The 12 slides — p. 47 — One chapter per slide

When you pitch

Beyond your deck — p. 86 — Newsletter, NDA, FAQ, meeting, data room

Dirty Shortcuts — p. 92 — Let us do the hard part

All startups, people, quotes and numbers in the examples are fictional. All images in this guide are AI-generated.

CONTENTS

Nine chapters take you from raw facts to a deck investors want to talk about.

BEFORE YOU START

Your deck's one job	4
How investors read your deck	5
Your free deck from AddedVal.io	6
Twelve slides, one story	8
When to change the order	9

CHAPTERS

Build process	10
Action titles	15
Design rules	21
Numbers	32
Investor psychology	39
The 12 slides	47
Beyond your deck	86
Dirty Shortcuts	92

YOUR DECK'S JOB

Your deck has one job: getting you a 30-minute meeting.

It almost always starts the same way: you meet an investor, you spark interest with one or two sentences, and the investor asks for your deck. Everything in this guide comes from more than 5,000 deck reviews, and it all serves this one moment.

1. **You meet an investor** — At an event, on LinkedIn or through an intro.
2. **Two sentences** — What you do and why it matters. The investor gets curious.
3. **"Send me your deck"** — From now on, the deck has to work without you.
4. **3 minutes of reading** — Late at night, often on a phone. See page 5.
5. **A 30-minute meeting** — The one goal of your deck.

EXAMPLE: WHAT IT IS, FOR WHOM, ONE PROOF

> **We are Vendraqo. Our AI agent turns a 5-hour quote round into a 20-minute job for industrial buyers, and 40 plants already pay for it.**

NOT MORE, NOT LESS

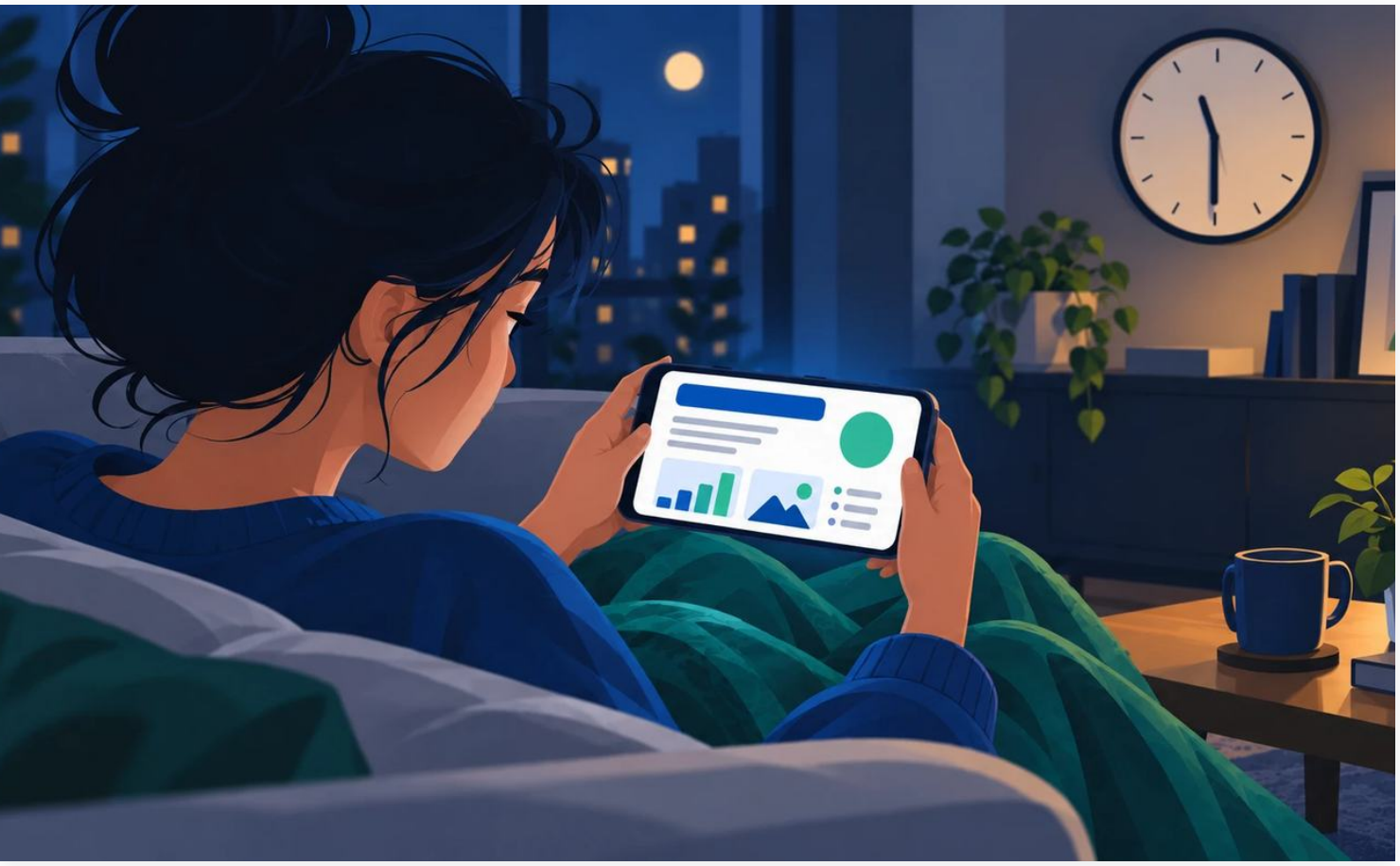
Your deck does not close your round, replace due diligence or answer every question. It makes investors curious enough to want to meet you. If it already answers everything, they no longer need the meeting.

	READ DECK (SEND-AHEAD)	PRESENTING DECK (LIVE)
Purpose	Get the meeting	Win the meeting
Must work	Without you in the room	With you speaking
Text	Action titles and key numbers, readable alone	Fewer words, bigger visuals
Length	12 slides	12 slides plus a backup appendix

This guide teaches the read deck, because it decides whether you get the meeting at all.

HOW INVESTORS READ

Investors give your deck about 3 minutes, and they mostly read titles and the biggest numbers.



The first pass happens late at night and often on a phone. If the titles and the key numbers work, investors read on. If not, they close the file. Three rules follow from that:

The title carries the message.

Write every title as a full sentence, ideally with a number.

Action titles | page 15

One element dominates.

Each slide has one hero: a number, a product view or a chart.

Design rules | page 21

The key number is the biggest.

Nothing on the slide is larger than the number that matters.

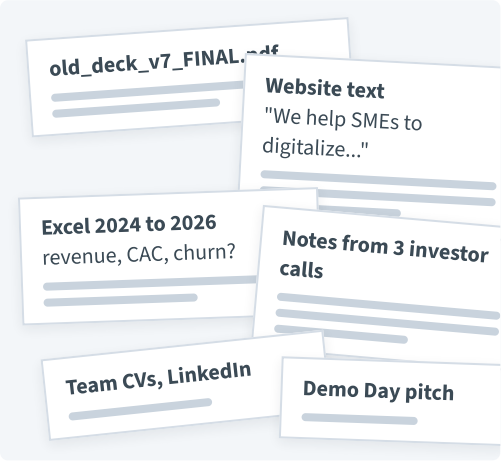
Numbers | page 32

FREE FOR FOUNDERS

Turn this guide into your own deck, for free.

Sign up at AddedVal.io and give us everything you have about your startup. We turn your raw information into a pitch deck investors will love: **it tells an intriguing story, it is backed by data, and it hits the right nerves.**

LOTS OF TEXT IN



AddedVal.io

12 STRONG SLIDES OUT



WHAT YOU GET

Your complete 12-slide deck
Built with every rule in this guide.

A list of open questions
Everything you still need to finish the deck yourself.

Why every slide looks this way
A clear explanation for each of the 12 slides.

3 design concepts
Colors, shapes and fonts based on your industry and topic.

Your fundraising plan
Personal and step by step, for angel rounds from €100K to €1M.

All of it for free
No credit card, no catch.

SIGN UP FOR FREE

app.addedval.io/signup

Scan the code or click the link. It takes two minutes.

SCAN OR CLICK

YOUR FREE DECK

Your deck will follow every rule in this guide.

We build your deck with the same rules you are about to read. That is why investors will want to meet you, and why you will understand every slide we hand you.

It tells an intriguing story

- One job: the meeting p. 4
- The order investors want p. 8
- Titles that tell the story p. 15

It is backed by data

- Best number in the title p. 18
- Euros and clear units p. 32
- Every number checked p. 11

It hits the right nerves

- FOMO where it works p. 39
- One hero per slide p. 21
- Readable on a phone p. 31

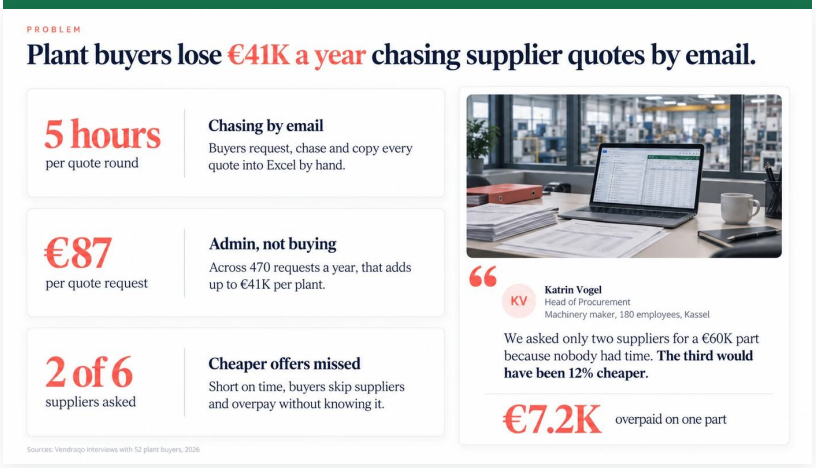
FICTIONAL EXAMPLE: SAME FACTS, STRONGER SLIDE

A typical slide



Clean and tidy, but... the title has no number, the facts sit in small text and the quote has no name.

✓ Your slide from us



HOW IT WORKS

1 Sign up
Free at app.addedval.io/signup.

2 Share what you have
Old deck, website, numbers, notes. Rough is fine.

3 Get your package
Deck, open questions, 3 designs, fundraising plan.

START NOW, FOR FREE

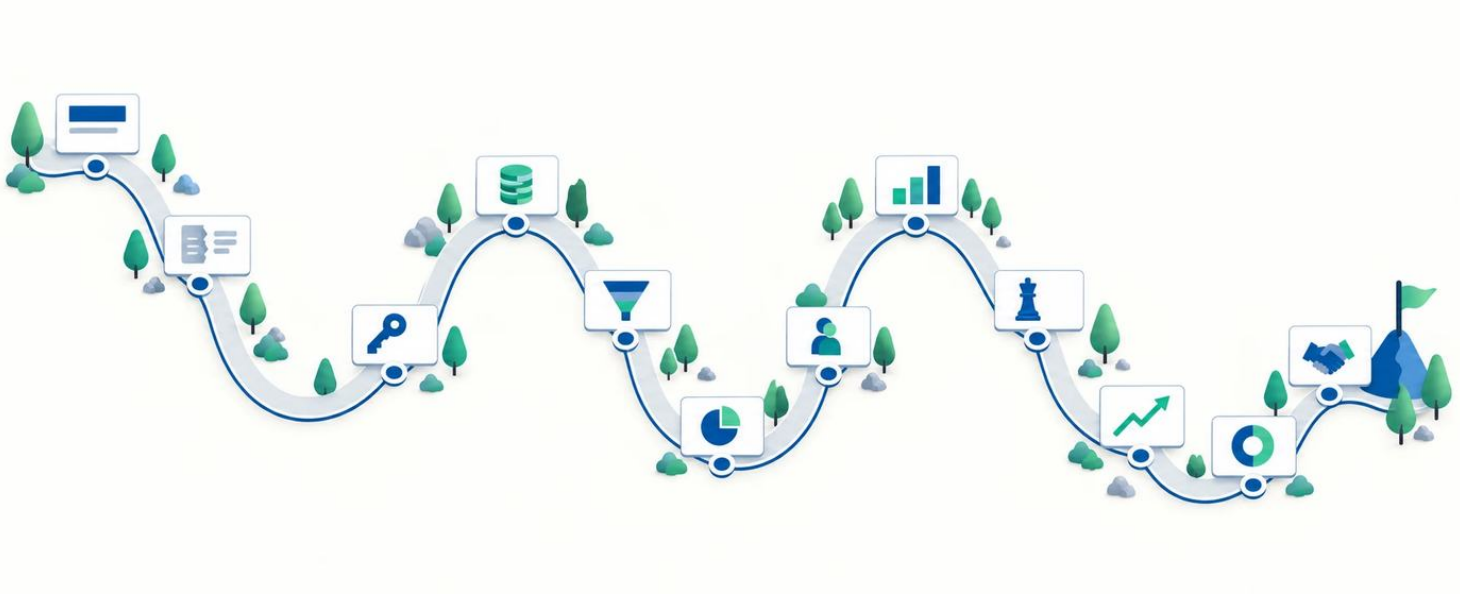
app.addedval.io/signup

Deck, open questions, 3 design concepts, fundraising plan.

SCAN OR CLICK

THE STORYLINE

Twelve slides answer twelve investor questions, and together they tell one story.



SLIDE	THE INVESTOR'S QUESTION
Cover	What is this, in one sentence?
Problem	Is the pain real, measurable and felt by someone who pays?
Solution	Does this obviously solve it?
Business Model	Do they make money, and does it scale?
Go-to-Market	How do customers come in, and is that repeatable?
Market	Is it big enough for a 10x return?
Way to €100M	Is there a believable path to €100M+ revenue?
Competition	Where do they stand, and can they defend it?
Traction	Is there momentum, or only a nice story?
Team	Are these the right people for exactly this?
Funding	What do I get for my money?
Call to action	What do I do next?

Keep the standard order unless one argument is exceptional, then move it forward.

The twelve slides on page 8 follow the order investors expect. Change it only for a clear reason: one slide is so strong that it should come first, or one slide does not fit your business.

Serial founders



IF

Your team has already built one or two VC-backed startups with an exit.

THEN

Move the team slide right after the cover, even before the problem. Without an exit, it stays where it is.

Exceptional traction



IF

Your numbers are so strong that they would convince investors on their own.

THEN

Move traction right after the cover, even before the problem.

Lifestyle products



IF

People buy your product for joy or status, not to solve a pain.

THEN

Skip the problem slide and open with the desire behind the product.

Every change has a cost, so move a slide only if it is clearly your strongest argument.

Slides your deck doesn't need

Executive summary → CUT

Too little context for your key points, and every fact then appears twice.

Vision → Way to €100M

Show where you are heading on the slide that shows the path, page 69.

Mission → Call to action

Close with why you do it, page 82.

Why now → Problem

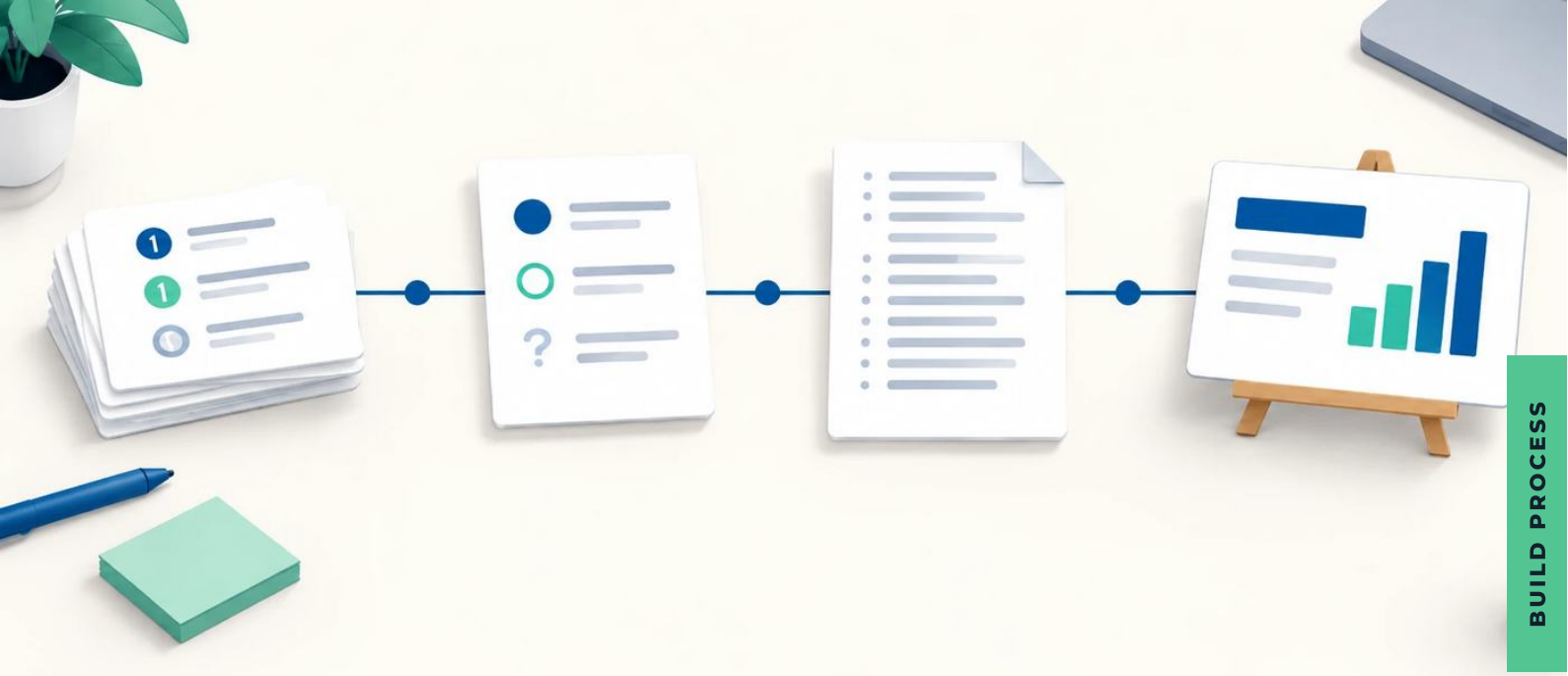
Explain the timing where you show the pain, page 50, and back it up across the deck.

Financial forecast → CUT

At pre-seed and seed, investors judge team, market and traction.

Roadmap → Funding

Show the milestones this round pays for, page 80.



BUILD PROCESS

Facts come first, the story second and the slides last.

Most weak decks were designed too early. Build yours in three steps: collect, tell, build.

COLLECT THE FACTS

Every slide pulls from one fact sheet, so nothing gets invented on a slide.

Before you open a slide tool, fill one document with these eleven blocks. It becomes the single source for every number, name and quote in your deck, and every fact in it gets a marker. If you feed it to an AI later, the document can be completely unstructured: notes, copied emails and bullet points all work.

BLOCK	WHAT GOES IN
Startup	Name, one-liner as a full sentence, city, founding year, B2B or B2C, model type
Problem	Who pays (role, industry, size), the core pain, 3 concrete pains with numbers, one real customer quote
Product	What it does, how it works step by step, 3 key features, what makes it different
Business model	Pricing model, price, ARPU, CAC, LTV, payback, gross margin
Go-to-market	ICP, channels you use, channels already proven, first funnel numbers
Market	Market definition, TAM, SAM, SOM, CAGR, sources
Competition	Status quo, incumbents, startups, with funding, HQ and pricing
Traction	Revenue, growth rate, customers, pilots, LOIs, programs, press
Team	Founders with roles, 3 achievements each with numbers, former employers, advisors
Funding	Amount, runway, monthly burn, use of funds, milestones
Brand	Logo, primary color, one accent color, fonts

Mark every fact

Real
You can prove it.

Estimated
Marked "est." on the slide.

Missing
Fill it, or leave it off.

TELL THE STORY

Your 12 titles must tell the whole story before you design a single slide.

YOUR WHOLE STORY IN ONE SENTENCE

"Vendraqo turns the 5-hour supplier quote round of mid-sized manufacturers into a 20-minute job."

- Write the 12 action titles on one page, in order, before any design.
- Read only the titles out loud. Someone new must be able to retell your startup.
- Lock the numbers: a number on two slides has the same value on both.

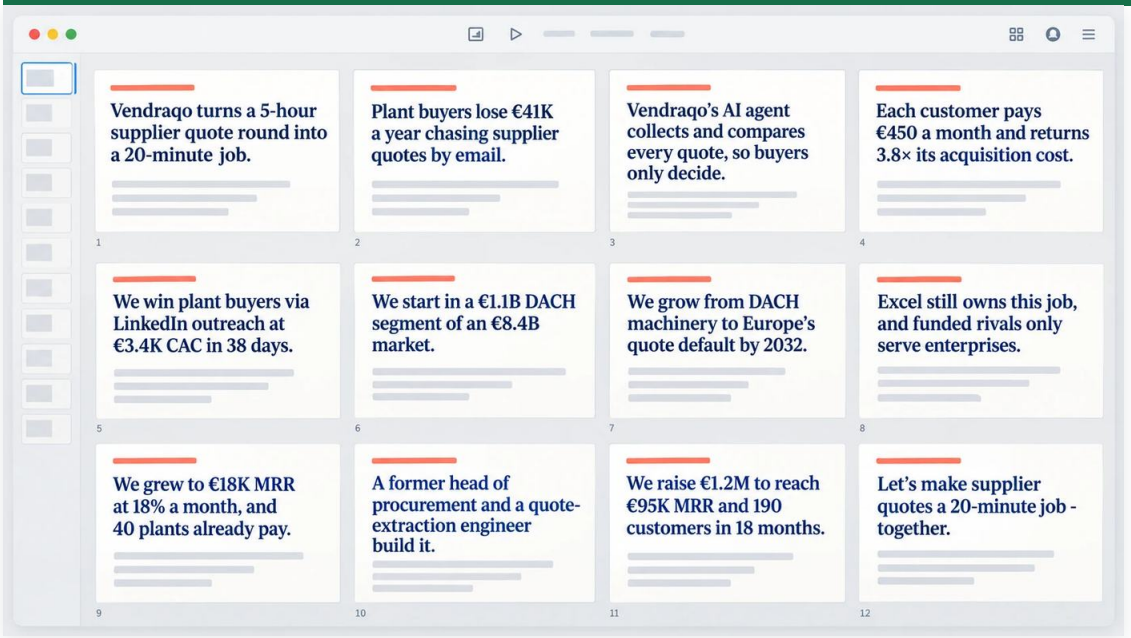
SLIDE	EXAMPLE STORYLINE: VENDRAQO
Cover	Vendraqo turns a 5-hour supplier quote round into a 20-minute job.
Problem	Plant buyers lose €41K a year chasing supplier quotes by email.
Solution	Vendraqo's AI agent collects and compares every quote, so buyers only decide.
Business Model	Each customer pays €450 a month and returns 3.8× its acquisition cost.
Go-to-Market	We win plant buyers via LinkedIn outreach at €3.4K CAC in 38 days.
Market	We start in a €1.1B DACH segment of an €8.4B market.
Way to €100M	We grow from DACH machinery to Europe's quote default by 2032.
Competition	Excel still owns this job, and funded rivals only serve enterprises.
Traction	We grew to €18K MRR at 18% a month, and 40 plants already pay.
Team	A former head of procurement and a quote-extraction engineer build it.
Funding	We raise €1.2M to reach €95K MRR and 190 customers in 18 months.
Call to action	Let's make supplier quotes a 20-minute job - together.

If your titles alone tell the story, your deck works.

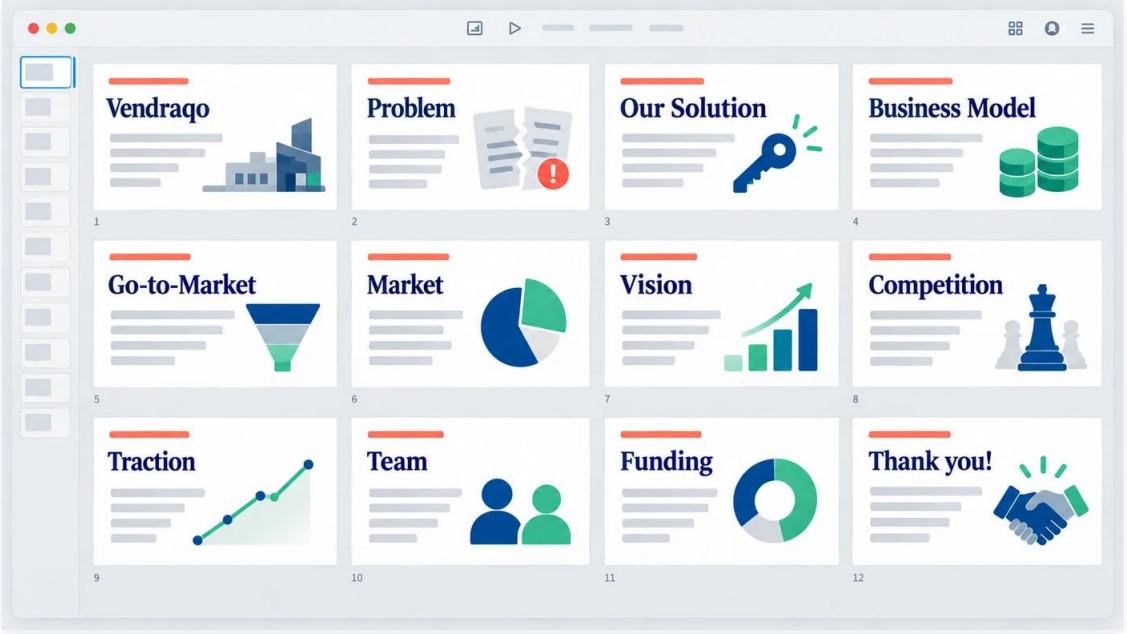
Read only your titles. They must tell the whole story.

On the first pass, many investors read nothing but the titles. Compare the two versions of the same deck below: one tells a story, the other only lists topics.

✓ DO | the titles alone tell the story



✗ DON'T | 12 labels, zero messages



BUILD THE SLIDES

Every slide has one job, and it never does another slide's job.

Each slide answers exactly one investor question from page 12. As soon as it also answers the question of another slide, both get weaker: the message blurs, and investors read the same point twice.

Mixed jobs we see all the time

Solution + **Problem**

A "without us, with us" comparison tells the problem a second time.

Problem + **Solution**

"That's why we built ..." reveals the product before the pain has landed.

Market + **Traction**

Customer logos or MRR next to the market size belong on the traction slide.

Way to €100M + **Funding**

Funding rounds and use of funds belong on the funding slide.

Competition + **Solution**

Long feature lists repeat the solution. Show only where you win.

Traction + **Roadmap**

Future milestones are a forecast, not proof. Show what already happened.

WHILE YOU BUILD

- Build the hero element first: the chart, the product view or the number. Then add support.
- Put the most important information top left and the least important bottom right. That is how investors read a slide.
- That is why a conclusion at the bottom of a slide rarely gets read. Your conclusion belongs in the title.
- Too much content? Cut it. Never shrink the font to make it fit.

THE OUTSIDER TEST

Send your deck to 3 people outside your industry and ask them to retell your startup in two sentences. If they can't, fix the story, not the design.

SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF WORK?
Send us your facts, get your deck for free.

SCAN OR CLICK



ACTION TITLES

60% of the content of every slide belongs in its title.

A great title carries your whole message in one sentence. On the next pages you will learn how to write titles like that, and how they make investors want to read on.

ANATOMY

A strong action title has six parts, and investors notice when one is missing.

The verb makes the difference. It turns a topic into a clear statement, so the brain does not have to work out what you mean. You can't afford investors getting your message wrong because they first had to think about it.



1. **Page label.** The small label names the slide type, so the title is free for the message.
2. **Subject.** Who the sentence is about: here, plant buyers.
3. **Verb.** Every clause has one. Without a verb, there is no message.
4. **A concrete number.** €41K turns a claim into evidence.
5. **One accent.** One clause in the accent color: the one the investor must remember.
6. **A period.** A full stop marks a finished statement, not a slogan.

FULL SENTENCE

Every action title is a full sentence with a verb in each clause.

Subject, verb, period: every clause gets a verb.

Before and after a comma or dash, each part of the title needs a verb. Fragments and teasers that only announce a topic force investors to guess your message, while a sentence delivers it.

✓ DO | subject, verb, number, period

PROBLEM

Restaurants lose €2,300 a month to no-shows, and deposits scare guests away.

€2,300	No-shows per month
18%	Tables left empty on Fridays
€0	Recovered today



"Every Friday I turn guests away for tables that stay empty."

Owner, 60-seat trattoria, Munich

✗ DON'T | a fragment, no verb, no message

PROBLEM

No-shows — a massive challenge for restaurants

€2,300	No-shows per month
18%	Tables left empty on Fridays
€0	Recovered today



"Every Friday I turn guests away for tables that stay empty."

Owner, 60-seat trattoria, Munich

✗ DON'T | a teaser, not a message

PROBLEM

Two problems for restaurants

€2,300	No-shows per month
18%	Tables left empty on Fridays
€0	Recovered today



"Every Friday I turn guests away for tables that stay empty."

Owner, 60-seat trattoria, Munich

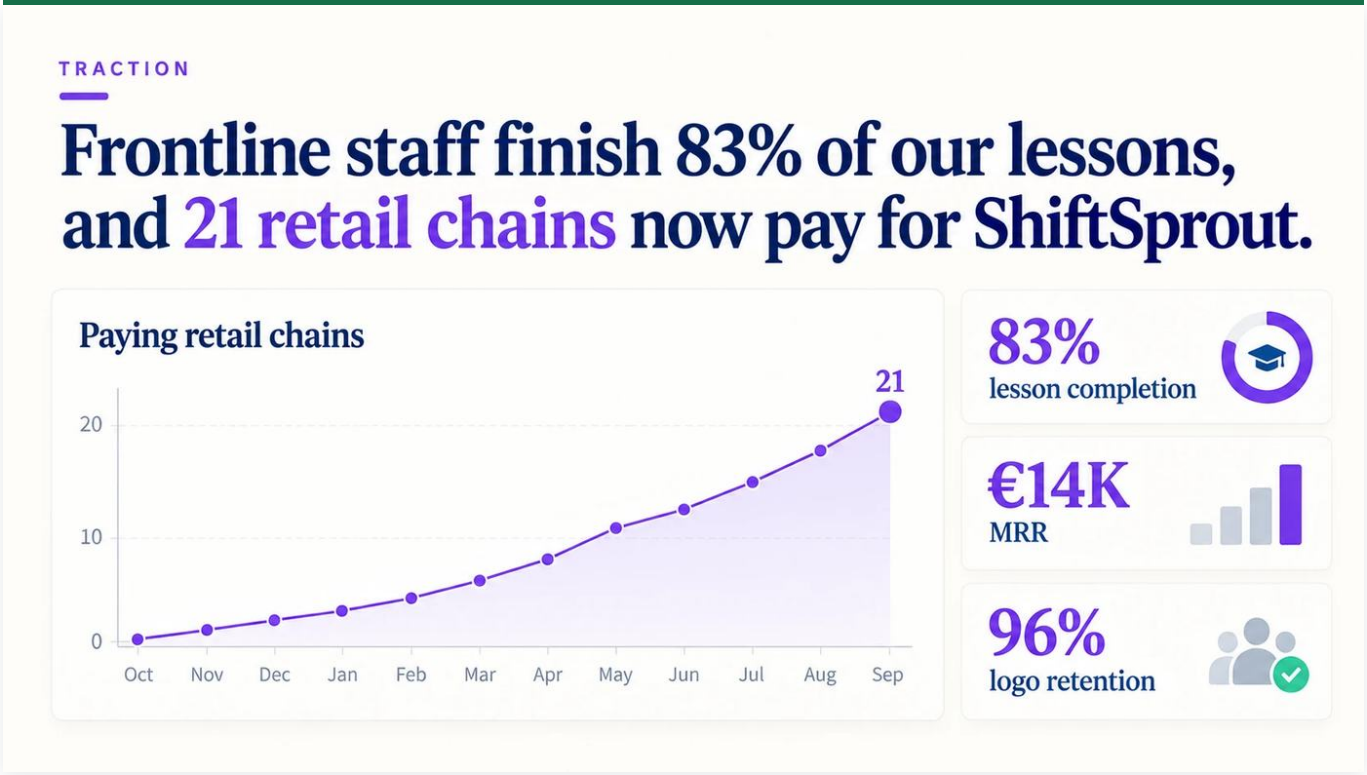
NUMBER IN THE TITLE

Put your strongest number in the title, not only in the chart.

Your strongest number belongs in the title.

"Strong adoption" is an opinion, "83% completion" is evidence. The chart can show the details, but the title already delivers the proof.

✓ DO | the proof is in the title



✗ DON'T | a claim without a number



WHY IT FAILS

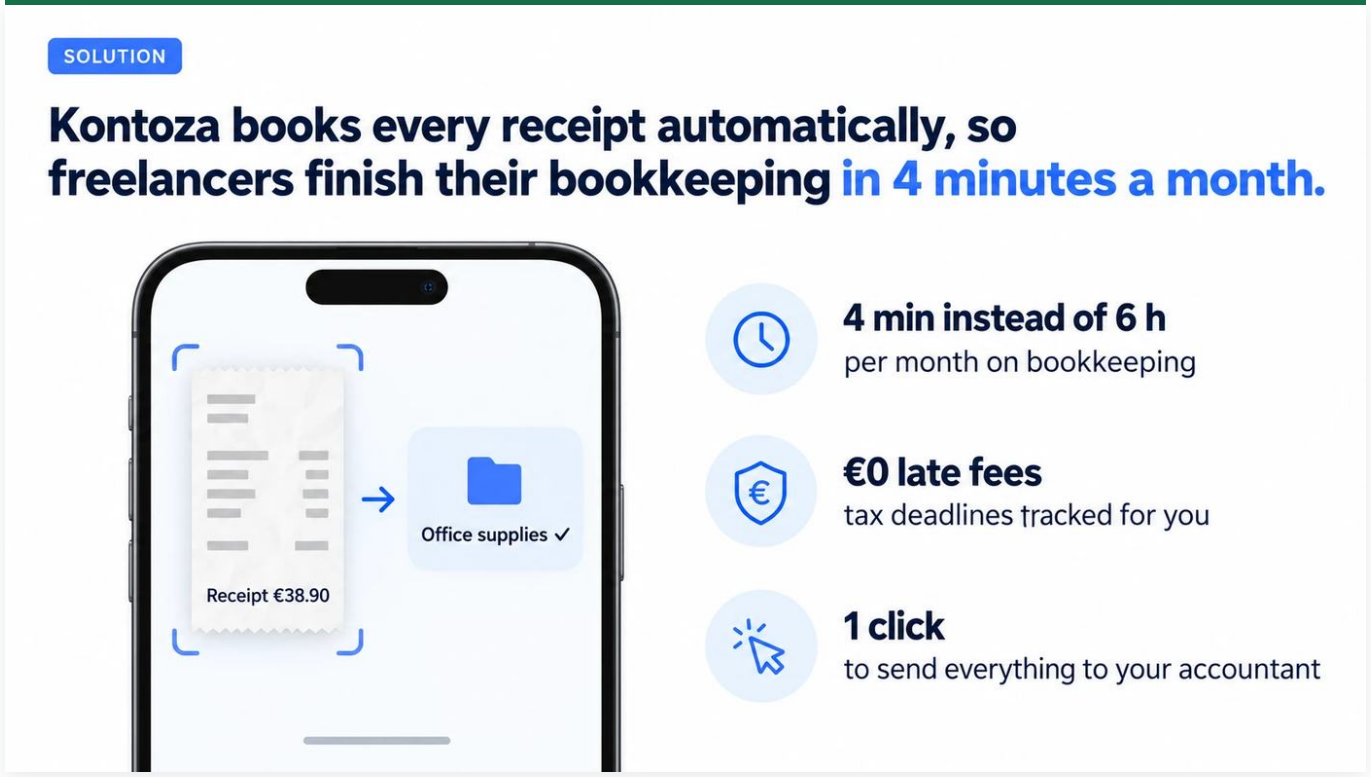
The title only claims. The proof, 83% and 21 paying chains, hides in the chart, where a skimming investor never looks.

Highlight exactly one group of words: the one investors must remember.

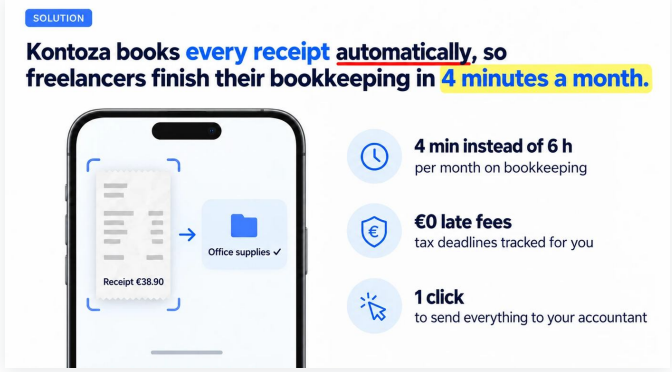
One accent color, one group of words, one message.

Always highlight the most important, surprising or shocking part of the title. On the cover, accent what makes you unique; on the problem slide, the pain; on traction, the growth rate, etc.

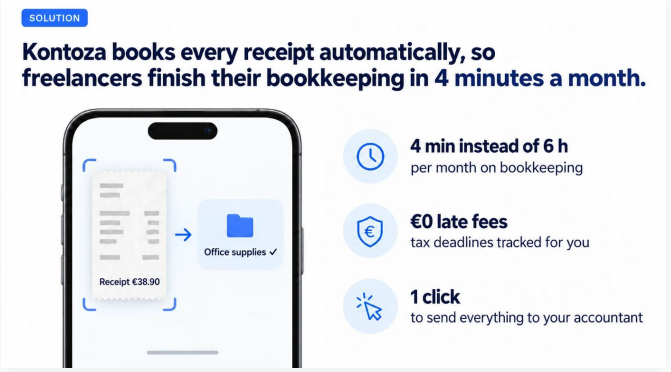
✓ DO | one accent, one message



✗ DON'T | three highlights, zero focus



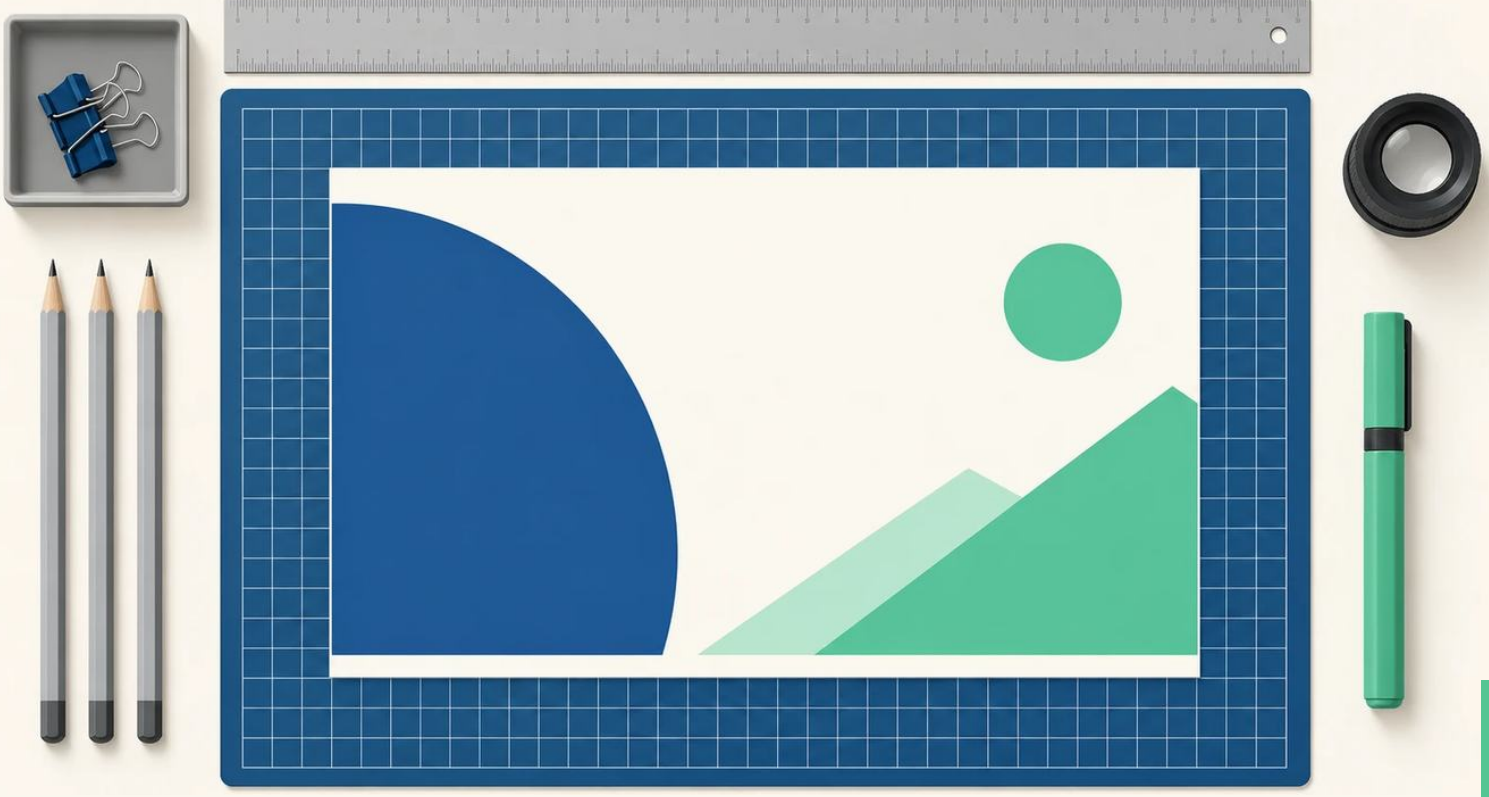
✗ DON'T | no accent, no anchor for the eye



Thirteen formulas give you a first draft for every title in minutes.

Fill the brackets with your own facts. Every formula already contains a verb, so the result is always a full sentence.

SLIDE	FORMULA
Cover (max. 20 words)	[Startup] turns [painful status quo] into [outcome] - [proof or constraint].
Problem	[Paying persona] loses [€X per period] because [cause].
Solution	[Startup] [does the core mechanism], so [persona] [gets outcome with number].
Business Model	Each customer pays [€ARPU] per [unit] and returns [X]× its acquisition cost within [N] months.
Go-to-Market	We win [sharp ICP] through [one channel] at [€CAC] CAC and a [N]-day sales cycle.
Market	We start in a [€SAM] [segment] within a [€TAM] market that grows [X]% a year.
Way to €100M	We grow from [niche] to [category default] and reach [€ARR] ARR by [year].
Competition	[Status quo] still owns the job, and [rival]'s [€funding] proves the category - we win [slice] with [differentiator].
Traction	We grew to [€MRR] at [X]% a month, and [customer] confirms [€ benefit].
Traction (pre-revenue)	[N] interviews, [N] LOIs and [N] pilots show [buyers] want [outcome] now.
Team	[Founder 1] [did the relevant thing] at [company], and [founder 2] [built the relevant thing] - together we cover [domain × tech].
Funding	We raise [€X] to reach [milestone 1] and [milestone 2] in [N] months.
Call to action	Let's build [concrete differentiator from an earlier slide] together.



DESIGN RULES

Design is how fast your content is understood.

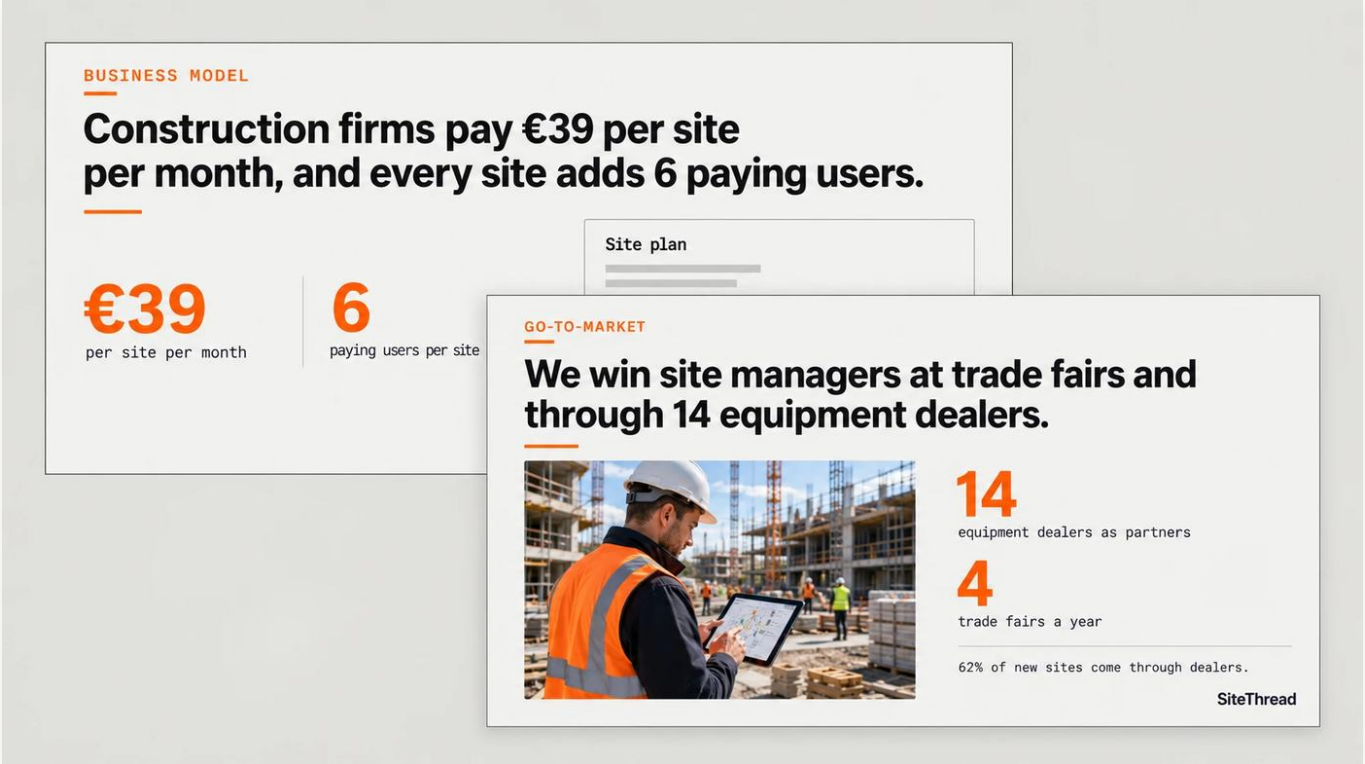
You don't need a designer. You need a few clear rules and the discipline to follow them on every slide.

One style system on every slide makes your team look organized.

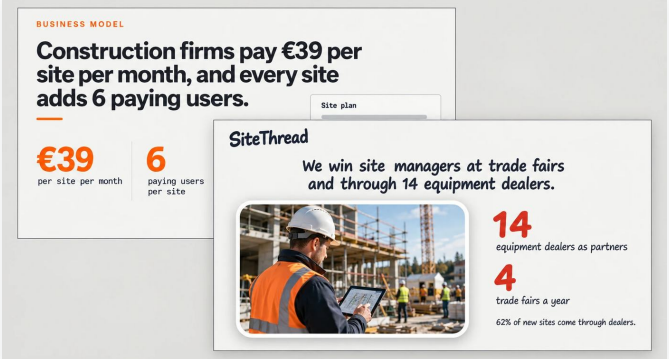
Define your styles once and never break them.

Title size and position, label, fonts (max. 2), colors, photo style, logo position and spacing stay the same on every slide. Never shrink one title to make it fit.

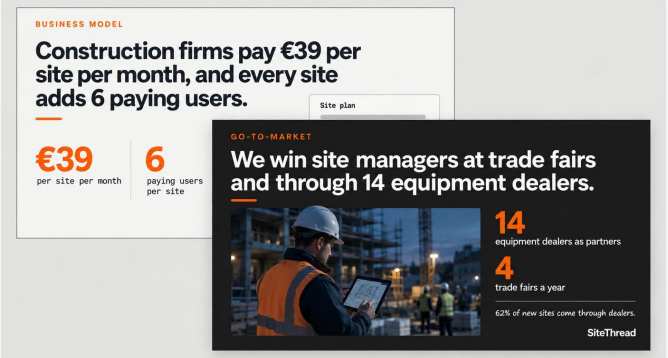
✓ DO | same system on every slide



✗ DON'T | every slide reinvents the style



✗ DON'T | dark mode with no apparent reason

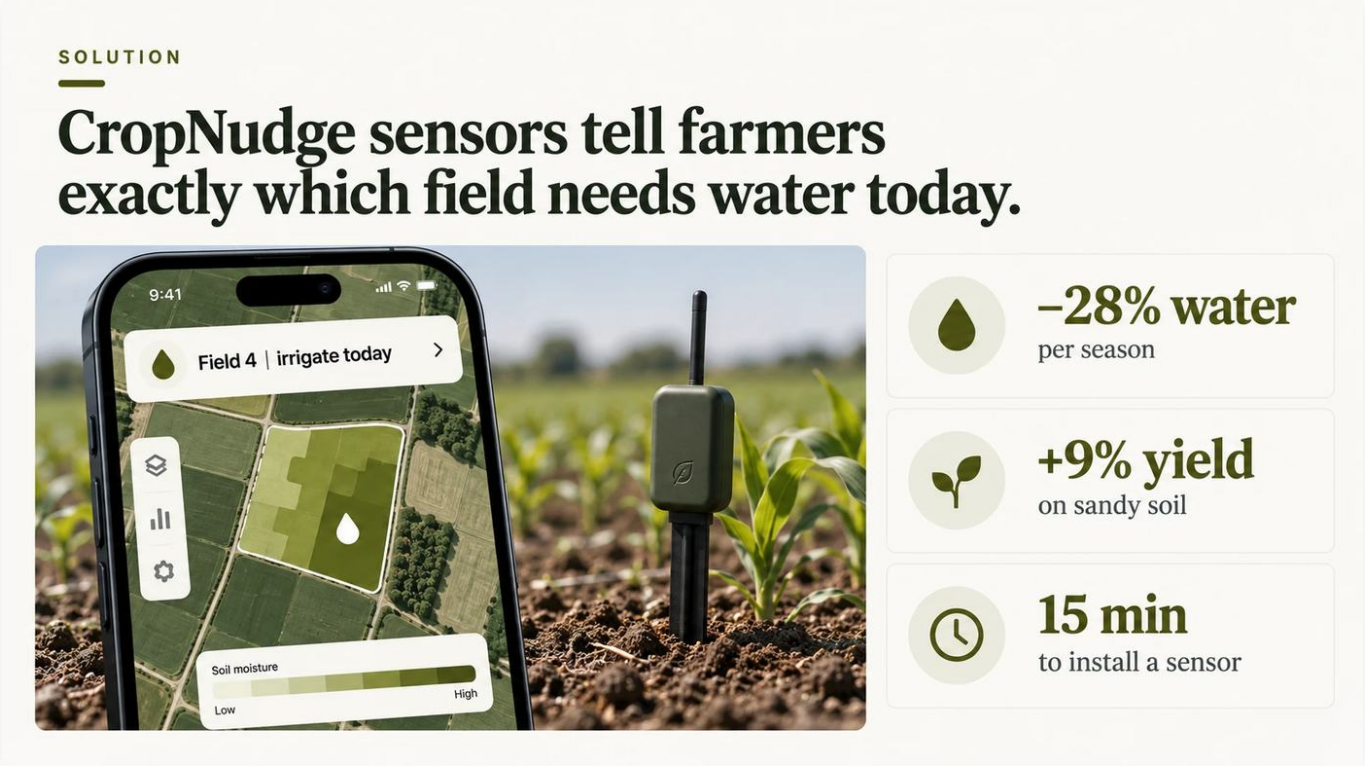


Every slide needs one hero, and everything else supports it.

One hero takes 50 to 70% of the slide.

The hero is a number, a product view or a chart. When six elements shout at once, investors hear nothing.

✓ DO | one hero, two helpers



✗ DON'T | six elements, no focus



WHY IT FAILS

Six elements of almost equal weight compete for attention. Nothing tells investors where to look first.

Three by three by three is the most a slide can carry.

Max. 3 elements, 3 points, 3 lines.

Three elements are a maximum: fewer are always fine, but a fourth or fifth element, point or line makes investors skip the slide for lack of clarity and too much effort.



max. 3 elements | 3 points | 3 lines

✓ DO | three channels, three points each

GO-TO-MARKET

We win mid-sized e-commerce brands through three channels at a blended €410 CAC.

38%
of new customers

Shopify App Store

- Listing with a 4.8 rating
- Self-serve setup in one day
- €180 CAC

31%
of new customers

Fulfillment partners

- 12 partners resell Reboxera
- 10% revenue share
- €390 CAC

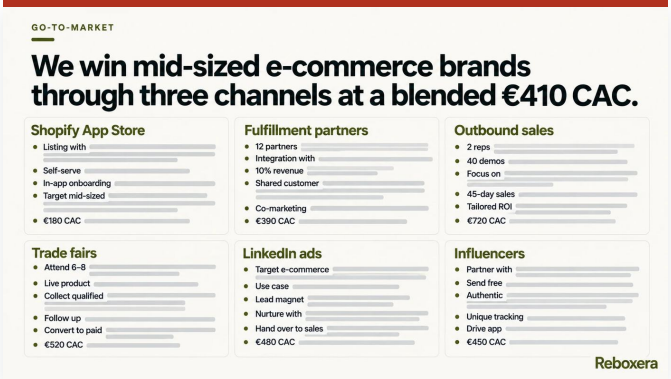
31%
of new customers

Outbound sales

- 2 reps, 40 demos a month
- 45-day sales cycle
- €720 CAC

Reboxera

✗ DON'T | six channels, walls of text



AND THE ONE HERO?

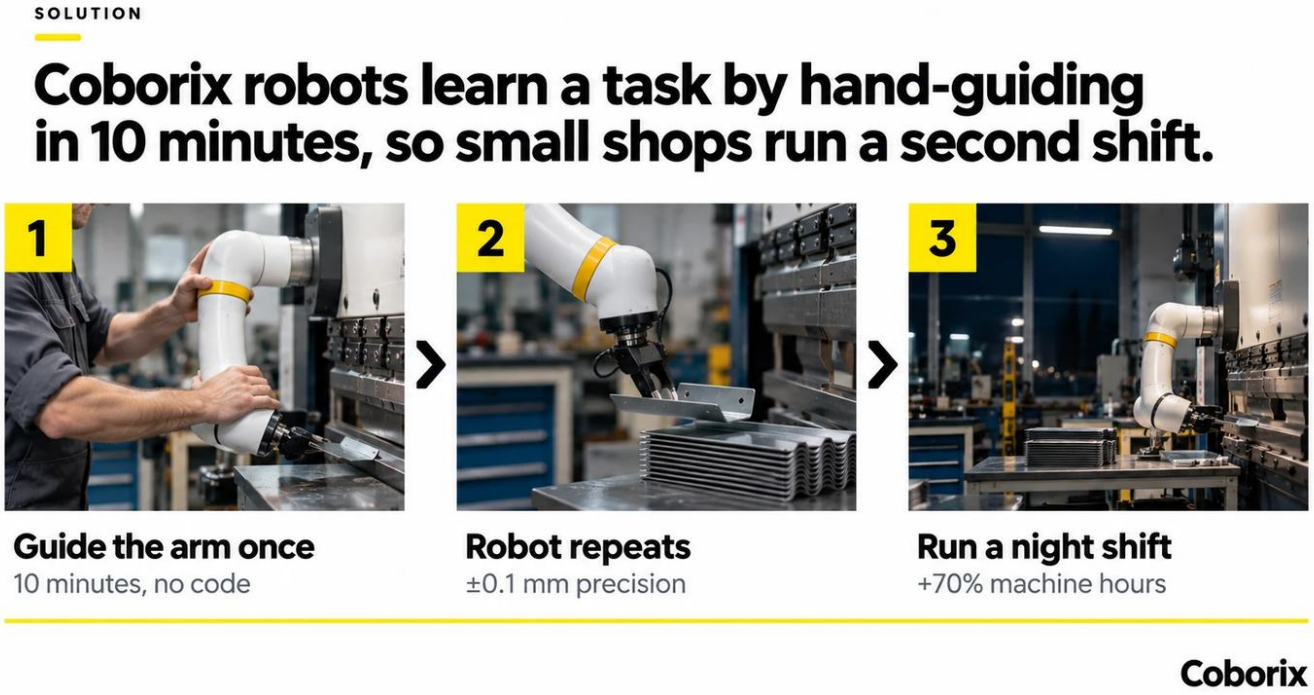
No contradiction. The hero decides what investors see first, the rule of three limits what they read next. The hero is one of the three elements, usually the biggest, and the other two support it, as on page 23.

A drawn process is understood in 2 seconds, a bullet list in 30.

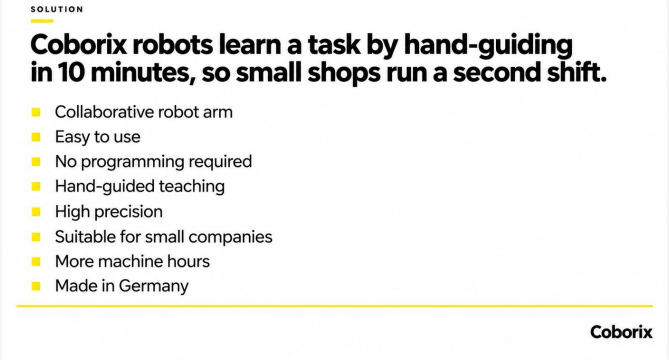
Replace bullet lists with a visual structure.

Use a flow, steps, a comparison or a product view. Every visual must carry content, never decoration.

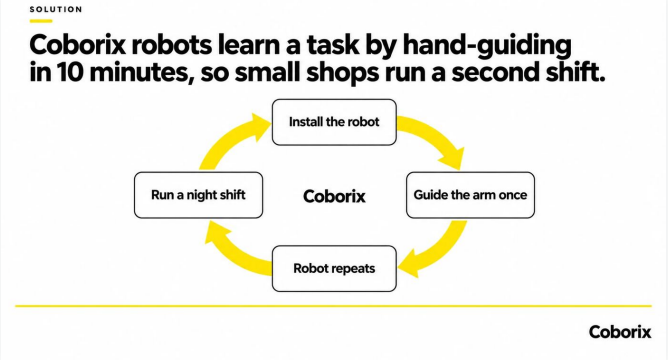
✓ DO | the process is visible



✗ DON'T | 8 bullets, no picture in the head



✗ DON'T | a cycle for a one-way process



Use one brand color and one accent, and keep the rest grey.

The accent marks only the most important element.

Color is a pointer: if everything is colored, nothing is pointed at. Use green and red only for good and bad, like +30% or -€50K.

✓ DO | one accent on the one number that matters



✗ DON'T | a rainbow, no signal



WHY IT FAILS

Every bar, box and word has its own color, so no color signals anything. The 4,200 that matters gets lost in the rainbow.

An invisible grid makes your slides look like quality.

Fixed margins, one grid, equal gaps, left-aligned.

Keep a margin of about 5% of the slide width and align every element to the grid, with white space around groups. A few millimeters off already reads as sloppy. Align text left: with centered text every line starts somewhere else, and the eye has to search for each new start. Inside boxes, leave generous padding: content that almost touches the border looks cramped.

✓ DO | one grid, equal gaps



✗ DON'T | everything a little off



WHY IT FAILS

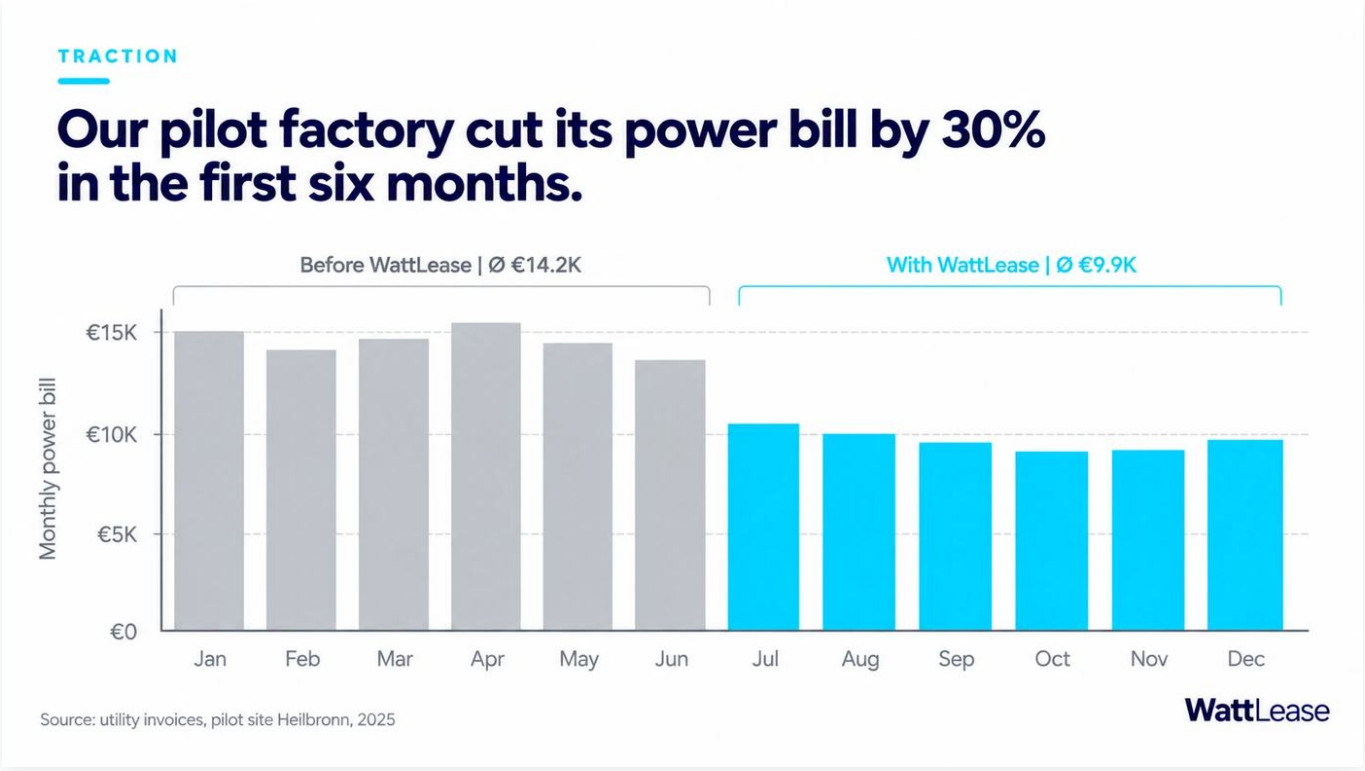
Nothing lines up, text crowds the box edges, and centered text makes the eye search for every line start. The slide looks careless, even when the content is strong.

Honest charts keep investors trusting every number.

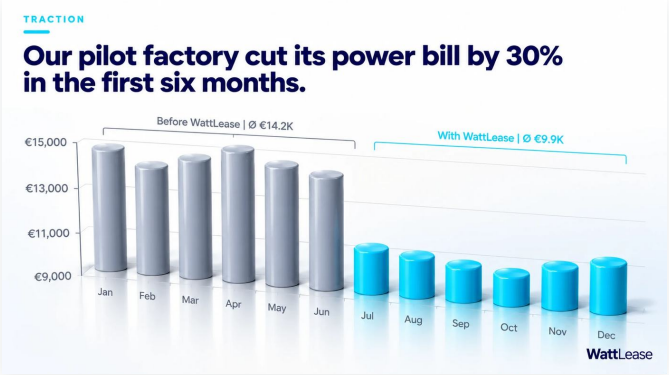
Right chart type, axes from zero, values on the chart.

Time: line or columns. Comparison: bars. Parts of a whole (max. 5): donut. Label the axes and put the source below. Write the final values directly on the chart and do the math for investors: for use of funds, write €900K for product, not just 45%.

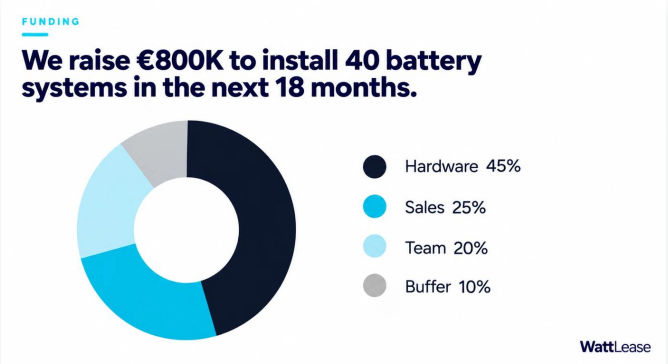
✓ DO | axis from zero, source below



✗ DON'T | cut axis, 3D, no source



✗ DON'T | only percentages, only color legend, investors do the math

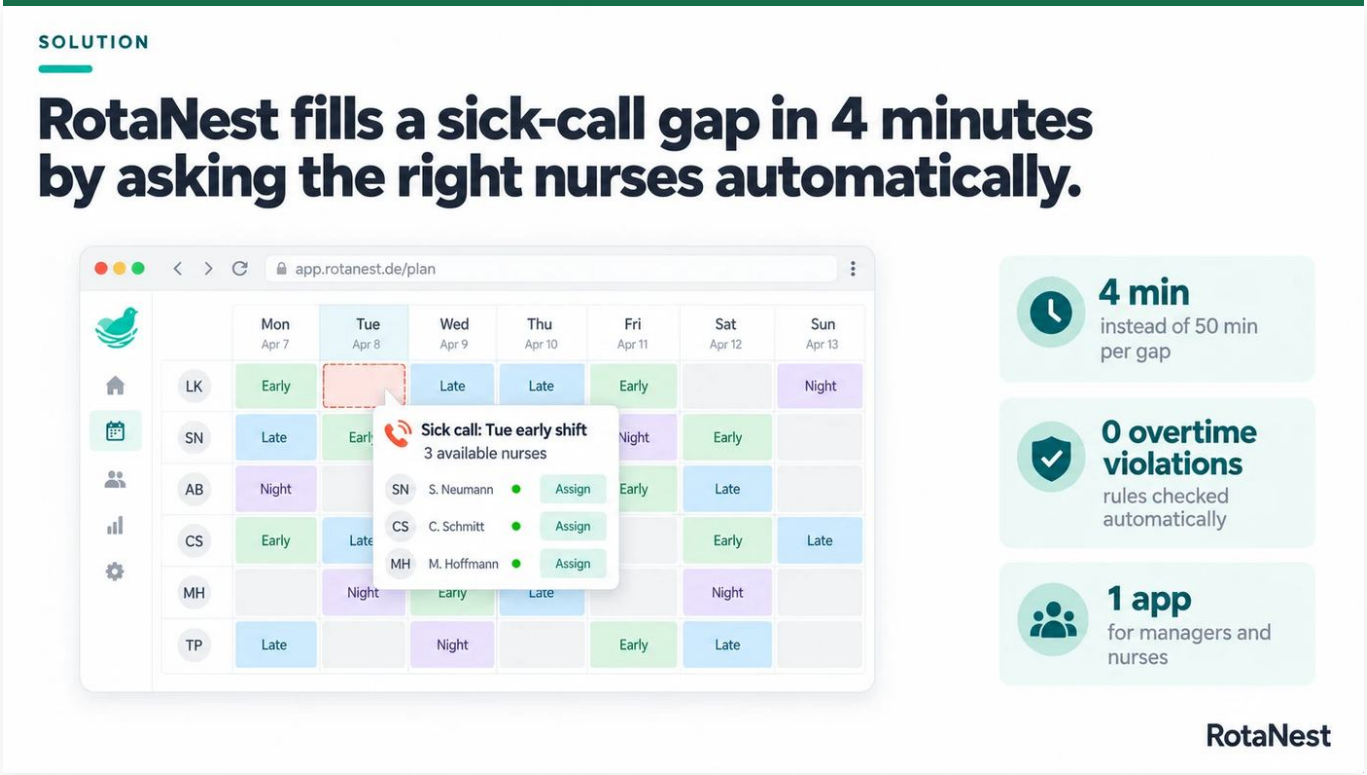


Show your product, because one image beats 1,000 words.

Show it, and show it from several angles.

Different screens, use cases and perspectives let investors picture your product at work. A real photo or screenshot is best, an AI visual or mockup second best, no image at all is worst. Never use stock handshakes or light bulbs.

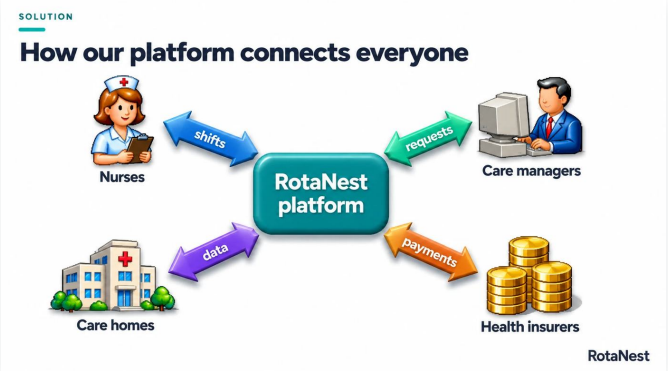
✓ DO | the real product, doing its job



✗ DON'T | stock photo, no product



✗ DON'T | a clip-art diagram, no product

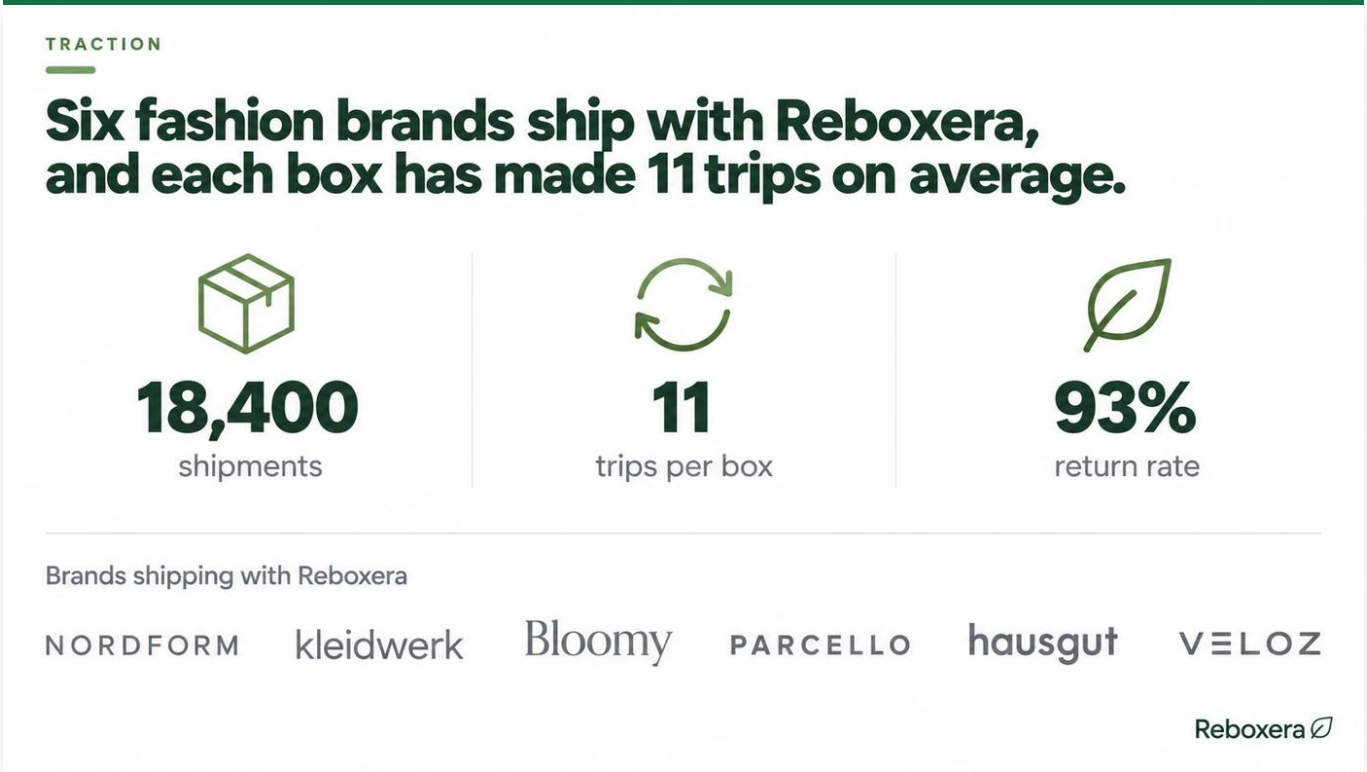


Logos in one tone and icons from one set turn noise into proof.

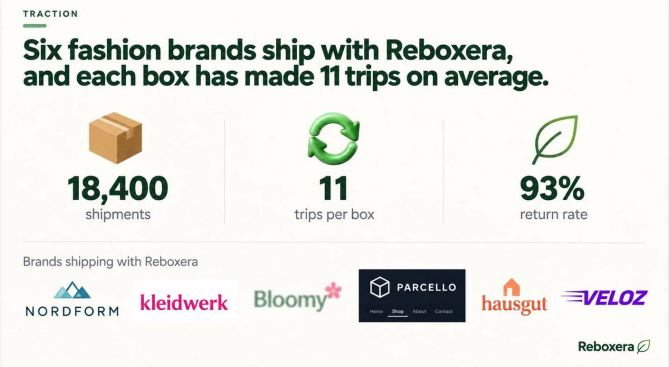
One color, one height, one icon set.

Show customer, partner and former-employer logos in grey or white, at the same visual height, on one line. Use icons from one set with the same stroke width.

✓ DO | one tone, one height



✗ DON'T | logo patchwork, mixed icons



WHY IT FAILS

Six logos in six colors and sizes, plus icons in three different styles, look like a patchwork. The proof turns into noise.

PHONE TEST

Every slide must work on a phone screen without zooming.

View each slide at 30% size.

The title and the hero must stay readable. On a 16:9 slide, body text should not be smaller than about 1/40 of the slide height.



Exaggerated on purpose: on a real phone, the slide is much smaller than shown here, which is exactly why title and hero must work at 30% size.

HOW TO RUN THE TEST

- Send the PDF to your phone and open it without zooming in.
- Read only the title and the hero of every slide at arm's length.
- Anything too small? Make the hero bigger or cut content. Never add more.

BEFORE YOU SEND: THE FILE

- 16:9, exported as PDF, under 10 MB
- Fonts embedded, no animations
- No videos and no external links
- No date, version or "confidential" stamp
- File name: Startupname_Pitch-Deck.pdf



NUMBERS

Numbers are like drugs for investor brains.

They feel good and make investors want more. They also show that you understand your business. Show them big, clear and honest.

Your key number is the biggest thing on the slide.

Bigger than icons and text.

When in doubt between an icon and a number, choose the number. Make it stand out with size, weight or the accent color, not all three at once.

✓ DO | the number is the hero

BUSINESS MODEL

Brands pay €1.85 per shipment - €0.38 less than cardboard, at a 64% margin for us.

€0.38
saved per shipment
vs. cardboard

€1.85
price per shipment

64%
gross margin
at 11 trips per box



✗ DON'T | icons win, numbers lose



WHY IT FAILS

Three big icons take the stage. The numbers that prove the business hide in small text below them.

Write proud numbers in full and costly numbers short.

Revenue in full, costs and funding in K or M.

Numbers that should impress, like revenue or traction, are written out: €486,000.00 feels bigger than €486K. Numbers that should feel small, like losses, burn or the round you raise, get K or M. Every number keeps its unit and thousand separators, is written in digits, and timelines use years instead of Phase 1, 2, 3.

✓ DO | revenue in full, burn and round short



✗ DON'T | no units, no separators, wrong frame



WHY IT FAILS

Is 2400 in euros, hours or nurses? Without units and thousand separators nobody knows. And "13 don't find it urgent" hides that 87% do.

SIZE SHOWS SIZE

Compared numbers must look as big as they are.

Visual size matches value.

The eye compares areas before it reads digits. A €2,300 loss next to a €39 fee must look many times bigger, so show both on the same scale.

✓ DO | the loss looks as big as it is



✗ DON'T | €39 looks bigger than €2,300



WHY IT FAILS

Two boxes of equal size, and the €39 is set larger than the €2,300. The eye reads the small number as the big one.

EURO FIRST

Turn the pain into euros per period.

As many problem numbers in € as you can.

They are business angels, not product angels: they invest in a business, and a business runs on euros. Time becomes hours × hourly rate, failures become rate × cases × value per case. Keep a natural unit only when a euro value would need too many assumptions.

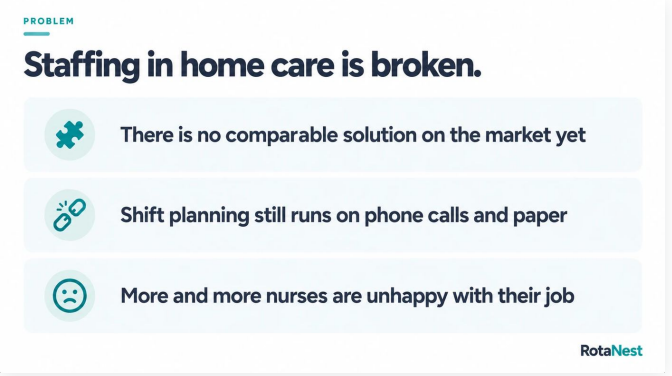
✓ DO | the pain has a price



✗ DON'T | painful, but free?



✗ DON'T | felt problems, no numbers



HONEST FRAMING

Choose the frame that shows the true size.

Absolute over percent, year over month.

4.2M freelancers, not 8%. €1,400 a year, not €117 a month. Every framed number must be real, sourced and on the same base as your other slides, or it collapses in due diligence.

✓ DO | true size, real base, sourced



✗ DON'T | same facts, shrunk



WHY IT FAILS

The same facts in the smallest possible frame: 4%, 8% and €117 make a big problem look small.

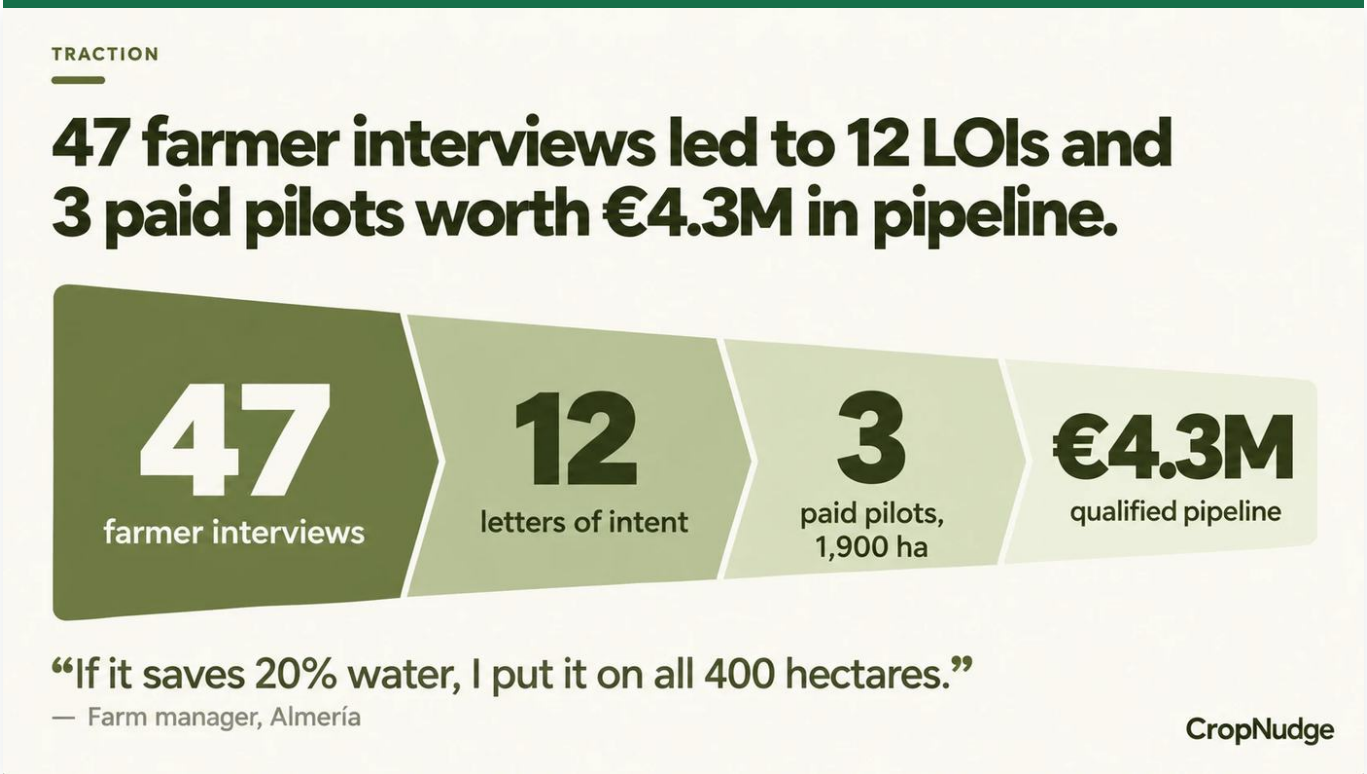
NUMBERS

Be exact where you counted and round where you estimated.

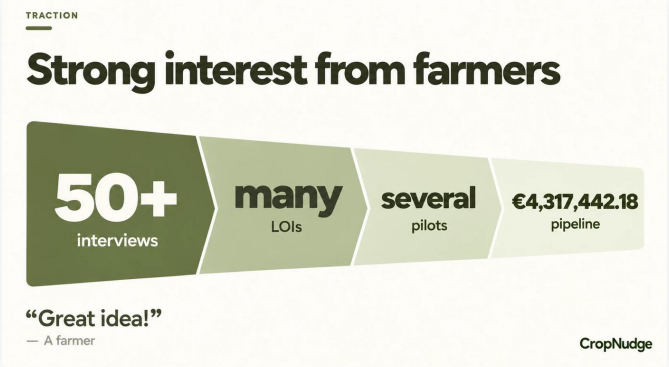
47 interviews, but €4.3M.

Counted numbers stay exact: 47 interviews, 12 LOIs. Estimates are rounded: €4.3M, not €4,317,442.18. Words like 50+, many or several sound like guessing.

✓ DO | counted exactly, estimated roundly



✗ DON'T | "50+", "many", ".18"



WHY IT FAILS

Vague where the founder could count, fake-precise where they estimated. Both cost trust.

NOT SURE ABOUT YOUR NUMBERS?
We check every number in your deck, for free.

SCAN OR CLICK



INVESTOR PSYCHOLOGY

Talk to the croc brain first.

Investors decide with their gut first and check with their head second. Your first slides must be simple, emotional and concrete, so investors feel "this matters" before they read your unit economics.

Nine triggers make investors afraid to miss out.



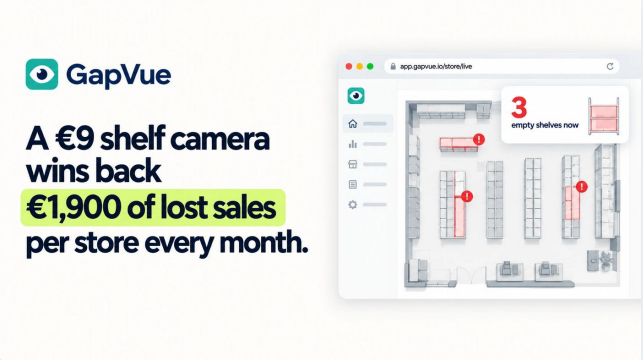
These triggers go straight to the investor's gut.

Each one creates a feeling that makes investors want in. But don't pull too many at once: a slide that uses every trick feels like a sales pitch, and investors start to distrust it. Pick the one that fits each slide best. The nine icons match the table below, in the same order.

TRIGGER	THE FEELING IT CREATES	BEST SLIDES
1 Asymmetry	Small input, big output	Cover, Market
2 Inevitability	This will happen anyway	Problem
3 Obviousness	Why didn't this exist before?	Solution
4 Completeness	Every building block is there	Business Model, Way to €100M
5 Insider effect	They know this market from inside	Go-to-Market, Team
6 Contrast	They are clearly different	Competition
7 Momentum	It is moving, fast	Traction
8 Protagonist effect	These founders are special	Team
9 Open window	The time is now	Funding

Three triggers make investors feel the upside.

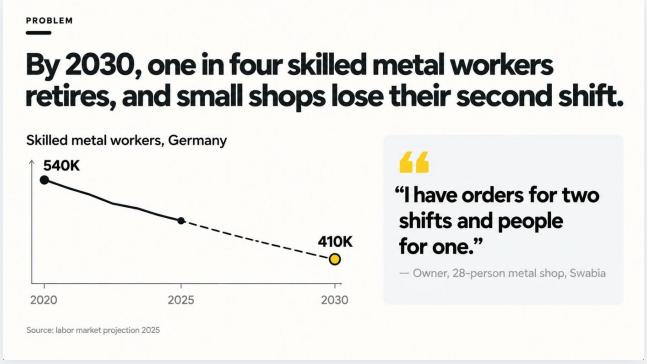
Each trigger comes with a sentence pattern you can fill with your own facts, and an example slide that uses it.



1 Asymmetry

Investors love a small input that unlocks a big output. Show the ratio as one pair of numbers.

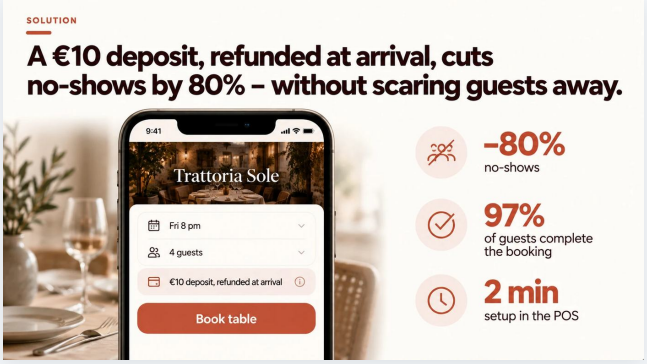
> "A [small input] wins back [big output]."



2 Inevitability

A trend that happens anyway makes the problem urgent. Show the force and the year it hits.

> "[Unstoppable trend] forces [customer] to [change] by [year]."



3 Obviousness

When the mechanism is simple, the solution feels overdue. Name the mechanism and the pain it ends.

> "A [simple mechanism] ends [costly pain]."

Three triggers make your business look ready to scale.

These triggers work on the slides where investors check whether the business holds together and who can build it.



4 Completeness

Every building block of the business is already in place. Show price, margin, payback and LTV/CAC together.

> "[Price], [margin], [payback] and [LTV/CAC] are all in place."



5 Insider effect

You reach customers others cannot reach. Name the channel only insiders have.

> "We reach [ICP] through [channel only insiders have]."



6 Contrast

Investors need to see where you are clearly different. One line: what others do, and what only you do.

> "[Others] do [X]; we are the only ones who [Y]."

Three triggers make investors want to act now.

These triggers belong to the last third of the deck, where investors decide whether to take the next meeting.



7 Momentum

Growth that keeps accelerating makes investors afraid to miss the train. Show where you started, where you are and how fast you grow.

> "From [A] to [B] in [time], growing [X]% a month."



8 Protagonist effect

These founders have done the thing that makes this possible. Tie each founder to one proof with a number.

> "[Founder] [did the thing that makes this possible] at [company]."



9 Open window

A deadline or a market shift makes now the moment. Name the date and what you will own by then.

> "[Deadline or shift] makes [year] the moment to own [category]."

Pick your triggers by stage and founder type.

Traction and team are the two slides where the right trigger depends most on who you are. Start from your stage and your strongest founder.

TRACTION SLIDE: BY STAGE

STAGE	TRIGGER AND PROOF
Pre-revenue	Inevitability: interviews, LOIs and pilots prove latent demand
Early revenue	Momentum: from 0 to N paying customers in M months
Growth revenue	Momentum: monthly growth, net revenue retention above 100%
Scale revenue	Asymmetry: small team, large ARR, efficient unit economics

TEAM SLIDE: BY STRONGEST FOUNDER

STRONGEST FOUNDER	TRIGGER AND MESSAGE
Serial founder	Protagonist effect: has built and sold a company before
Operator	Completeness: knows how to build the business side at scale
Deep specialist	Insider effect: has the skill others lack
Senior executive	Insider effect: knows the market from the top
Academic	Insider effect: knows what research can really do
Newcomer	No team trigger: lead with the pain you lived through yourself

MAKE BOTH SLIDES TELL ONE STORY

If your traction trigger is momentum, a team that has scaled before makes it believable. If you lead with inevitability, show why your team sees the shift earlier than others.

FIVE PRINCIPLES

Five principles explain why the rules work.

The rules in this guide are not taste. Each one uses a principle of how people judge information, so you can decide well when a rule does not fit your case.

1 Processing fluency

DESIGN RULES

What is easy to read feels more true. A clean slide with one message is judged more credible than a crowded one with the same facts.

2 Specificity

QUOTES, TEAM, TRACTION

Concrete details make a claim believable. "Owner, 60-seat trattoria, Munich" beats "customers love us".

3 Anchoring

PROBLEM, BUSINESS MODEL

The first number sets the scale for the next one. Show €2,300 lost per month first, and €39 a month for the solution looks small.

4 Social proof

TRACTION, FUNDING

What others already trust feels less risky. Customer logos, grants, programs and committed investors lower the perceived risk.

5 Peak-end rule

CALL TO ACTION

The end is remembered best. A clear ask and a strong last line frame how investors remember the whole deck.

THE HONESTY GUARDRAIL

Loss framing and bigger bases belong here too. They only work while every number stays real, sourced and consistent across your slides.

OPEN QUESTIONS

Leave the right questions open, because your deck should start a conversation.

The goal of the deck is the first meeting, not an exam. A deck that answers every possible question leaves investors nothing to ask you.

1. **Invite the questions you want.** "How did you get a 24% reply rate?" is a great first-call question, because you have a great answer.
2. **Say what you know and what you assume.** Mark estimates and hypotheses as such. Investors trust founders who know where their knowledge ends.
3. **Say what you have learned.** Use "We have learned that ..." once or twice, like "We have learned that care managers decide, not owners." It shows you test your ideas and want the truth, not that you think you know everything.
4. **Keep the details for the meeting.** Technical depth, every competitor and the full financial model belong in the conversation or the appendix.
5. **Prepare your answers.** Keep an investor FAQ with answers to the ten questions you get most, so the meeting builds on the deck.

IN THE DECK	IN THE MEETING
The problem in € and one quote	Every customer interview
How the product works in 3 steps	Technical architecture and roadmap details
Your 3 strongest traction numbers	The full pipeline and cohort data
Where you win against 2 or 3 rivals	Every competitor in the market
The round, runway and milestones	The full financial model and cap table

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

"I want to hear more about this. Let's talk."

BEFORE YOU BUILD 12 SLIDES
Let us build them for you, for free.

SCAN OR CLICK



THE 12 SLIDES

Twelve slides, one story investors can follow.

Every slide gets its own pages: how to build it, the mistakes investors hate and, where it helps, variants that also work. Each shows a real example slide, the question it answers for investors and what they should think after reading it.

COVER

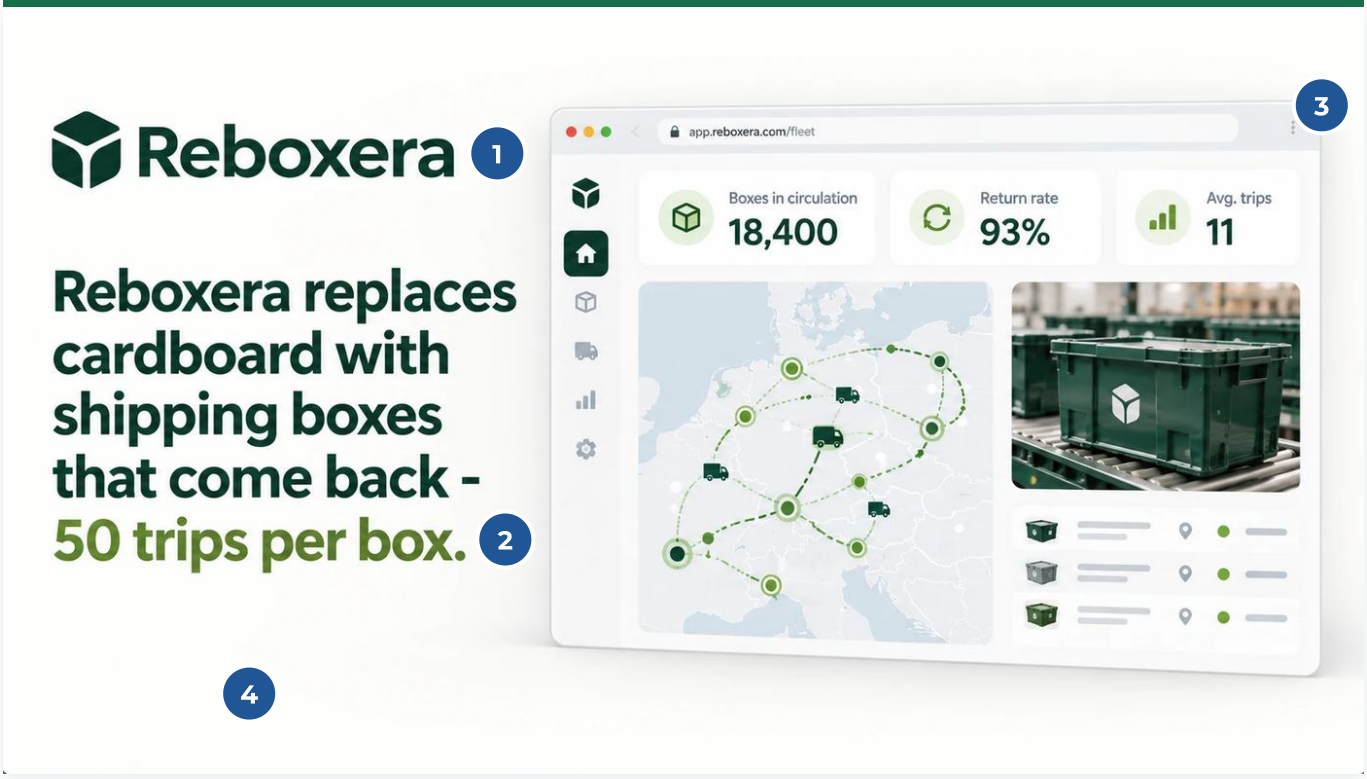
The cover tells investors what you build in one sentence.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> I know what this is. Show me the problem.

The cover is the first thing investors see, and it often decides how carefully they read on. **One sentence and one product view** have to make clear what you build and why it matters.

✓ DO | Reboxera: name, one sentence, the real product



1. **The wordmark.** Your startup name as a logo, top left. No extra partner or program logos.
2. **An action title with one accent.** Max. 20 words, and the accent sits on what makes you unique.
3. **The real product.** A screen in a browser or phone frame, a product photo or a rendering.
4. **Nothing else.** No tagline, no date, no version number, no funding ask.

A slogan cover says nothing about your startup.

Investors decide in seconds whether they keep reading. A cover that shows a mood instead of the startup wastes that moment, and every extra line hides the name. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | stock photo, slogan, admin details



1. **The background fights for attention.** A dark stock photo of leaves plus circles, dots and stripes makes the text hard to read and shows nothing real.
2. **The slogan says nothing.** "Packaging for a better tomorrow" could stand on any deck in the industry.
3. **Three fonts.** Script, serif and a thin sans on one slide look unplanned.
4. **The logo is off to the side.** Tucked into a corner, the name is the last thing investors see.
5. **A line full of admin details.** Version, date, "confidential", website, phone number and CEO name. Contacts belong on the last slide, the rest is noise.

PROBLEM

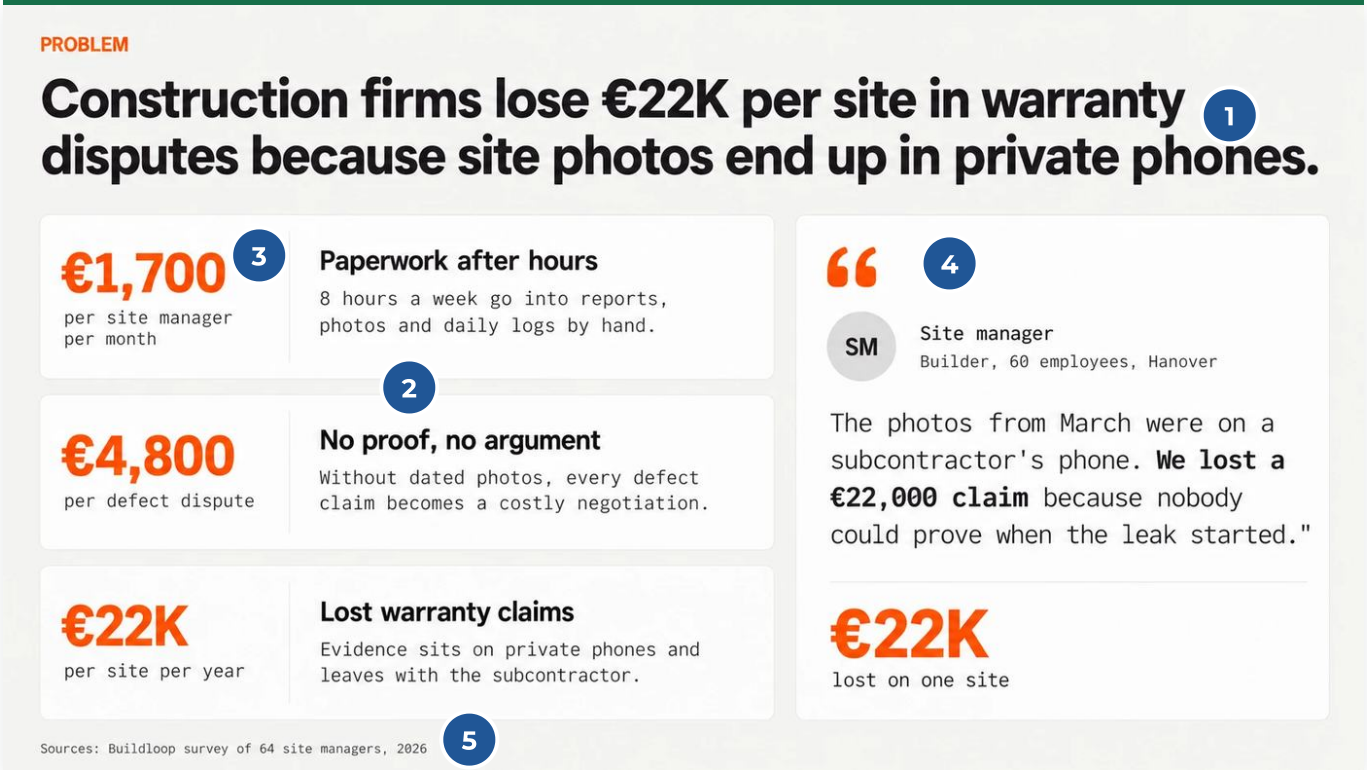
The problem slide proves that someone who pays feels a real, measurable pain.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> **I feel the customer's pain, and it has a budget.**

The problem slide decides whether investors care about anything that follows. Prove that **one specific customer who pays** feels a real pain today, and put a number on it.

✓ DO | SiteThread: one paying customer, one pain in euros



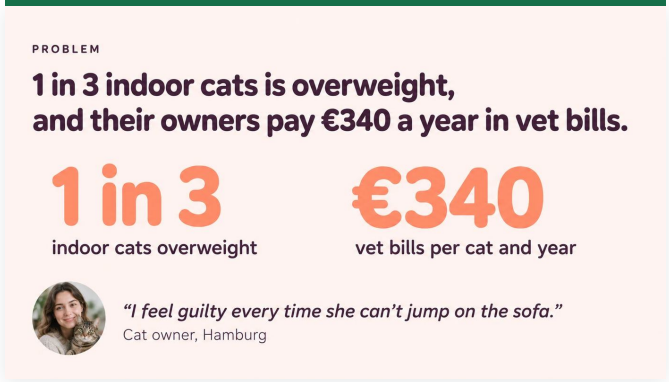
1. **€ pain in the title.** It names the paying customer, how much money they lose and why. Not society, not end users.
2. **Obvious, structural, hidden.** Three symptoms in that order: what everyone sees, the bottleneck, the risk nobody talks about.
3. **Numbers first, in €.** Each card leads with a big number; at least 2 of 3 are euros per period.
4. **A real customer voice.** One quote with role and context, one bold shock phrase and the damage in euros.
5. **Sources.** Every statistic gets a source, small at the bottom of the slide.

PROBLEM IN OTHER CASES

Every problem slide shows a measurable pain, even when the customer is not a business.

The rule stays the same in every case: someone who pays feels a real pain, and you can put a number on it. What changes is who suffers, who pays and which unit tells the story best.

✓ DO | Consumer



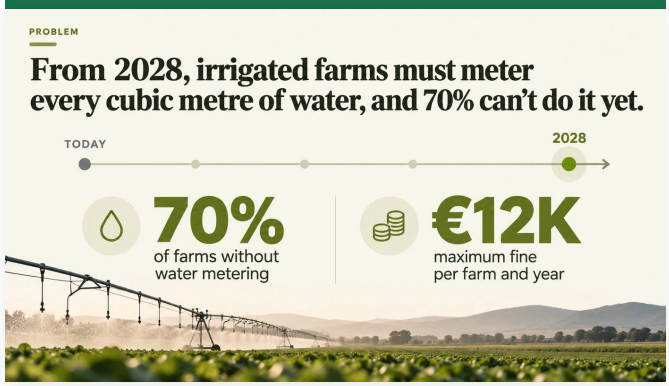
Consumer products. The pain can be health, time or worry. The user is the payer, so their own numbers lead.

✓ DO | Marketplace



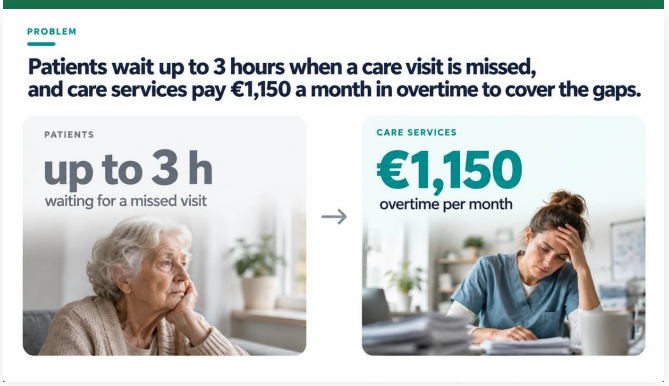
Marketplaces. Find the side with the more urgent problem and build the slide around it. Mention the other side only briefly.

✓ DO | Regulation



Regulation and why-now cases. The pain is coming for sure: show the date, the penalty and how many are affected.

✓ DO | User is not payer



User and payer differ. Human suffering sets the context. The numbers belong to whoever pays.

PICK THE UNIT YOUR PAYER CARES ABOUT

Euros for a business, health or hours for a consumer, the penalty and the deadline for regulation. If user and payer differ, the numbers go to the payer.

Investors close the deck when the problem slide lists facts instead of one costly pain.

Investors only invest when a paying customer feels a real pain. Market facts and vague problems give them nothing to measure. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | six problems, zero pain

PROBLEM

Problem 1

- Construction is one of the least digitized industries 2
- Paper-based processes
- Lack of transparency 4
- Skills shortage
- Climate change
- Germany has 380,000 construction companies 3

5



1 **A label, not a message.** "Problem" fills the most valuable spot on the slide and says nothing.

2 **Six problems.** Which one is THE problem? Investors need one pain, not a list.

3 **A fact, not a pain.** "380,000 companies" describes the market. Ask yourself: so what?

4 **No numbers.** Without euros or hours, the size of the pain stays invisible.

5 **No proof, no voice.** No source and no customer quote, so there is nothing an investor can check or feel.

SOLUTION

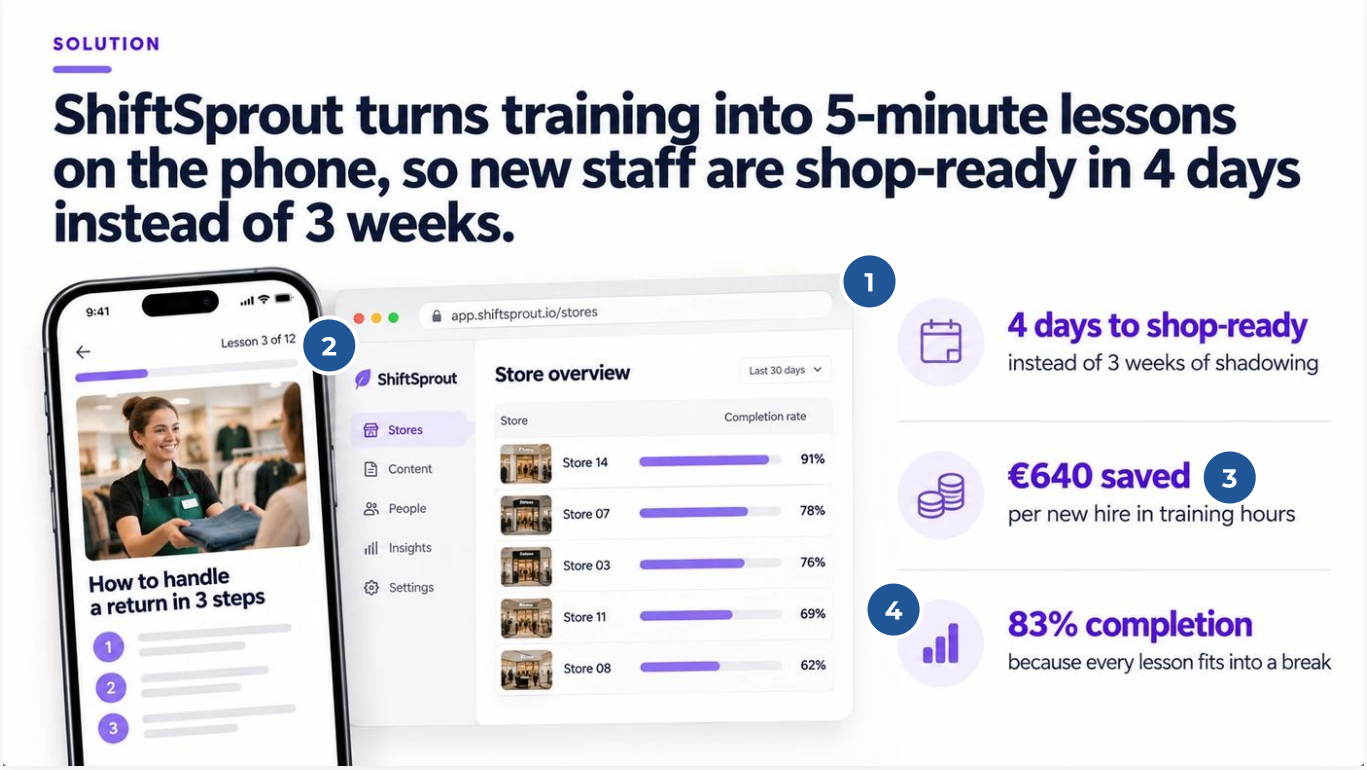
The solution slide shows your product ending the pain.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> **Obviously. Why didn't this exist before?**

The solution slide is where the story turns: after the pain comes the relief. Investors should see at a glance how **the product does its job** and ends the pain from the problem slide.

✓ DO | ShiftSprout: the product at work, benefits in €



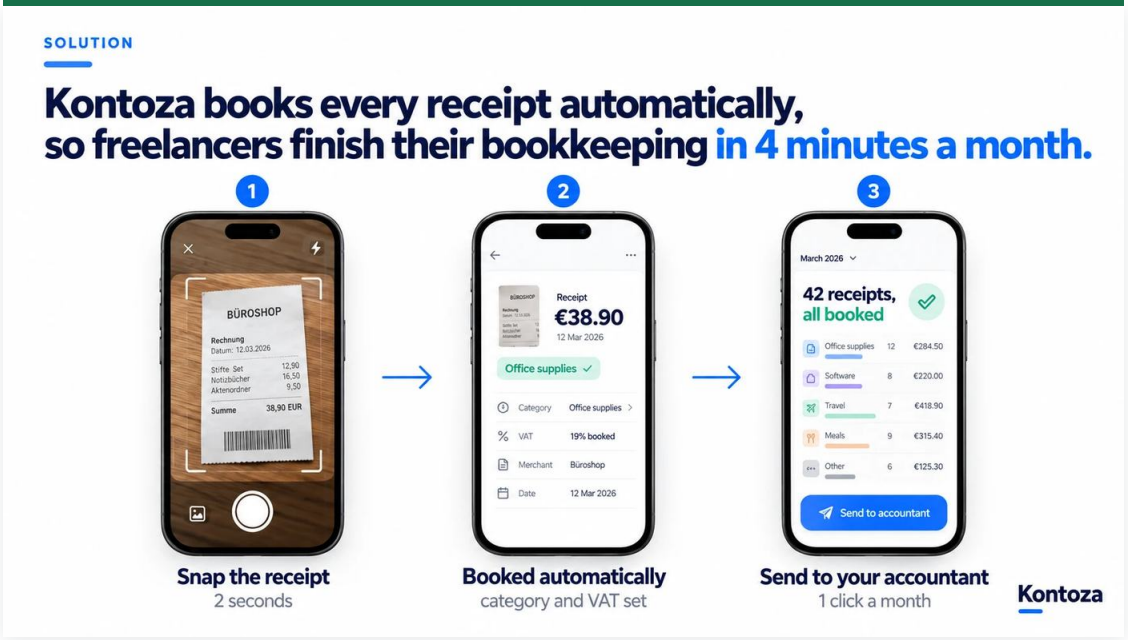
1. **One dominant product view.** The product fills 60 to 70% of the slide, so investors see what it does before they read.
2. **A different view than on the cover.** Show the result or the moment the pain ends, not the same screen again.
3. **At least one benefit in €.** It mirrors the problem slide: the € pain there becomes € saved here.
4. **Benefit through feature.** Every block starts with what the customer gets, then says how. Never the feature alone.

No visible interface? Then a before and after comparison can replace the product view.

Every solution slide shows what the customer gets, whatever you build.

The rule stays the same: the product ends the pain from the problem slide, and every feature comes with its benefit. What changes is how you show the product.

✓ DO | Mobile app



Mobile apps. Three screens as three steps show how the value builds up.

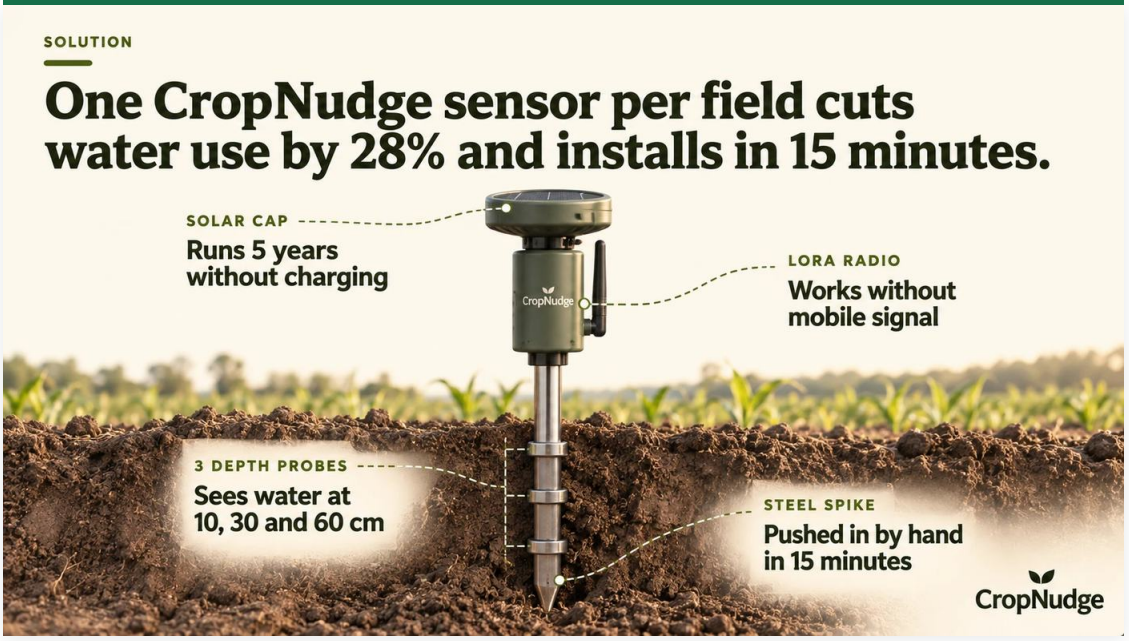
✓ DO | Food



Food. Pair every feature, like "100% vegan", with the benefit the buyer wants.

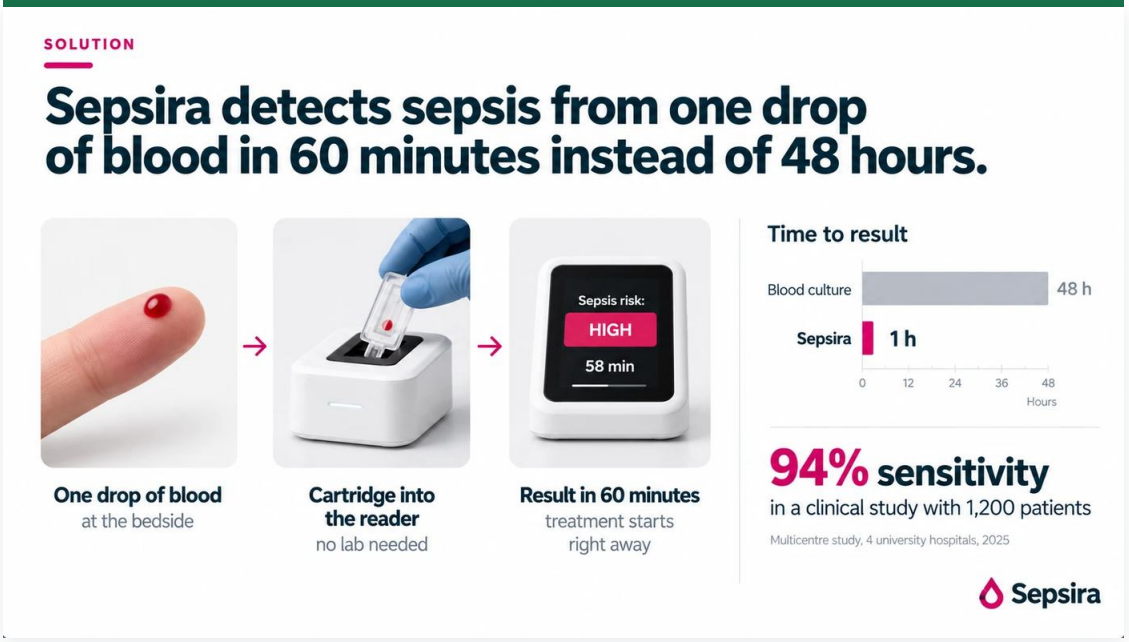
Hardware and biotech explain the how, then prove the benefit.

✓ DO | Hardware



Hardware. Show the device big, with dashed lines from each part to its benefit.

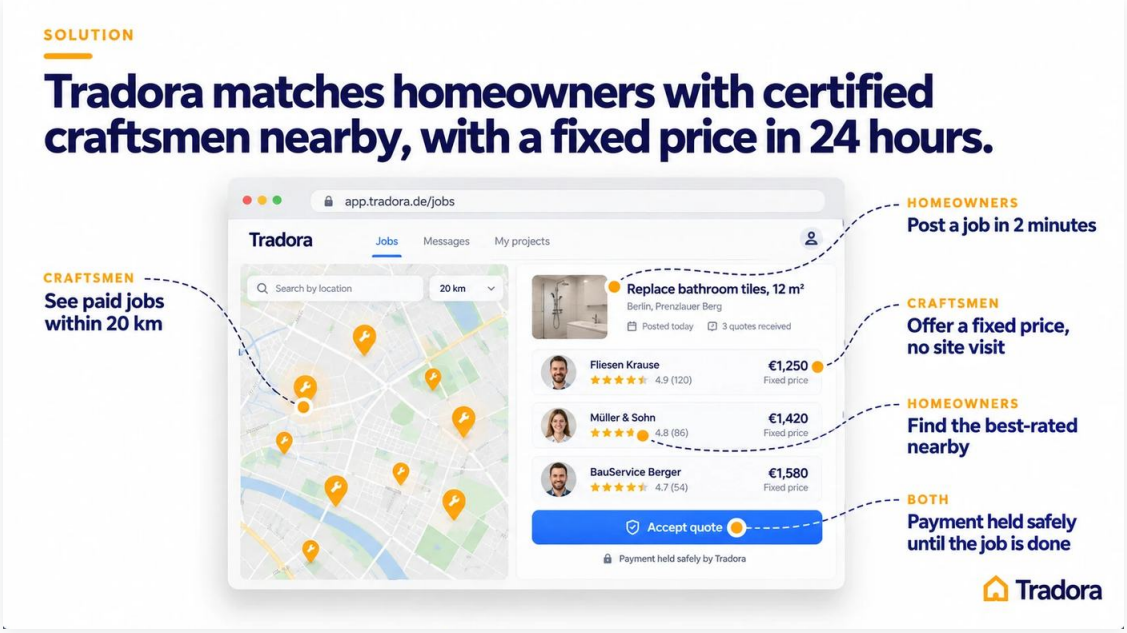
✓ DO | Biotech



Biotech and diagnostics. Explain the mechanism in three steps, then prove it with one hard number.

Platforms show who gets what, services show the path to the result.

✓ DO | Platform



Platforms and marketplaces. One big screen, dashed lines show who sees, offers and finds what.

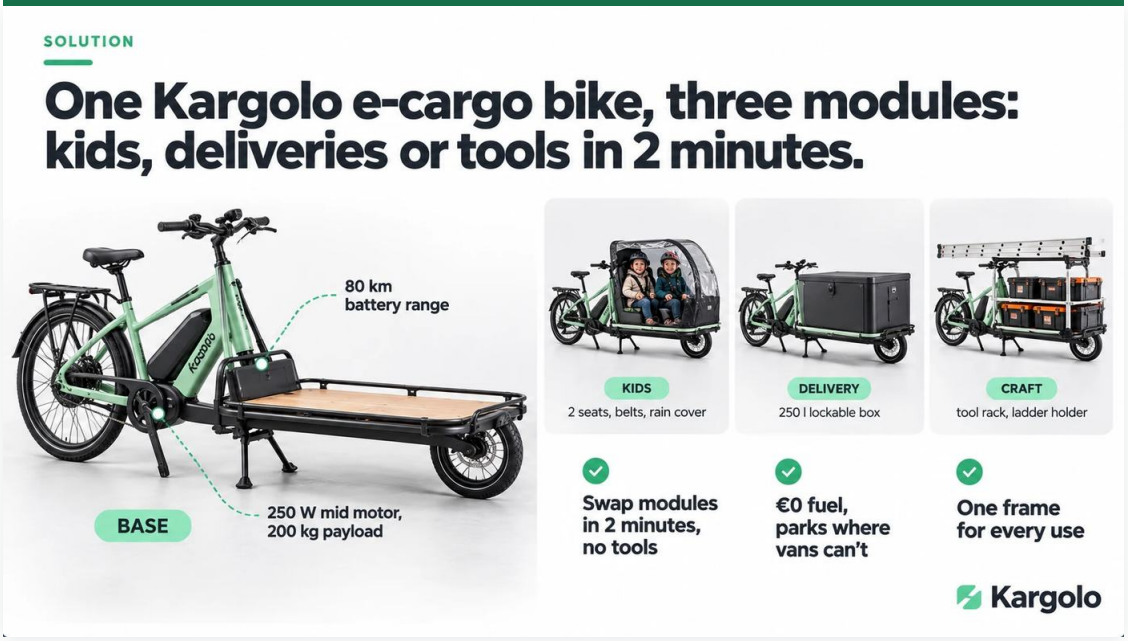
✓ DO | Legal tech



Legal tech and services. Starting point, your secret sauce, the result the customer wants.

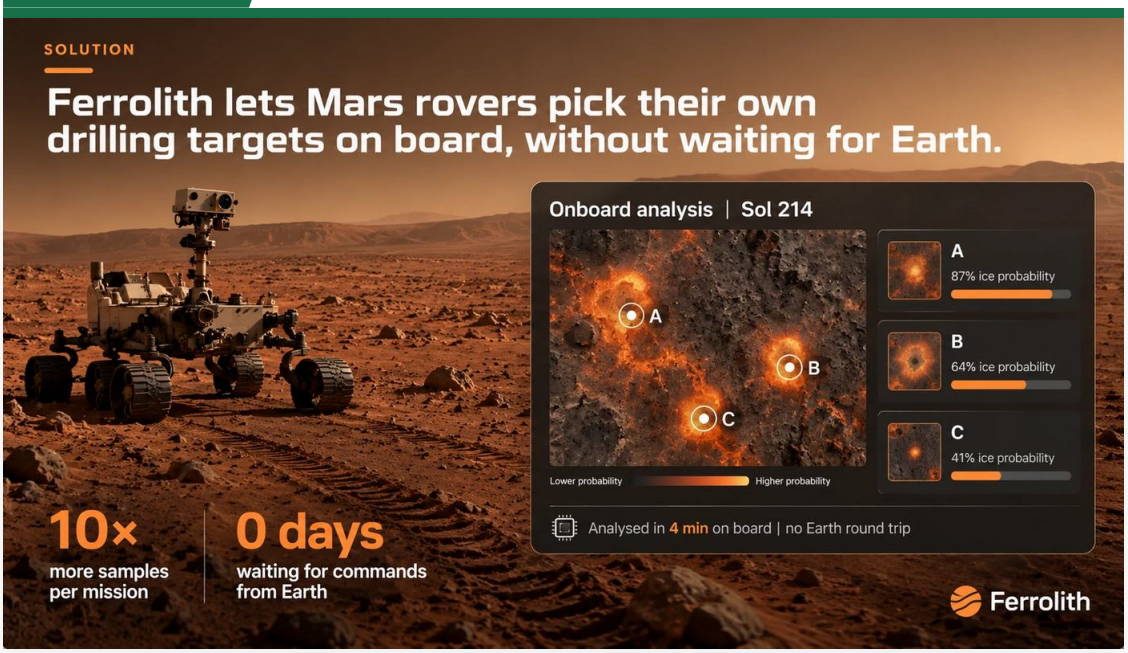
Modular products show every configuration, deep tech shows the technology at work.

✓ DO | Modular product



Modular products. The base version big, the configurations smaller, each with its benefit.

✓ DO | Deep tech

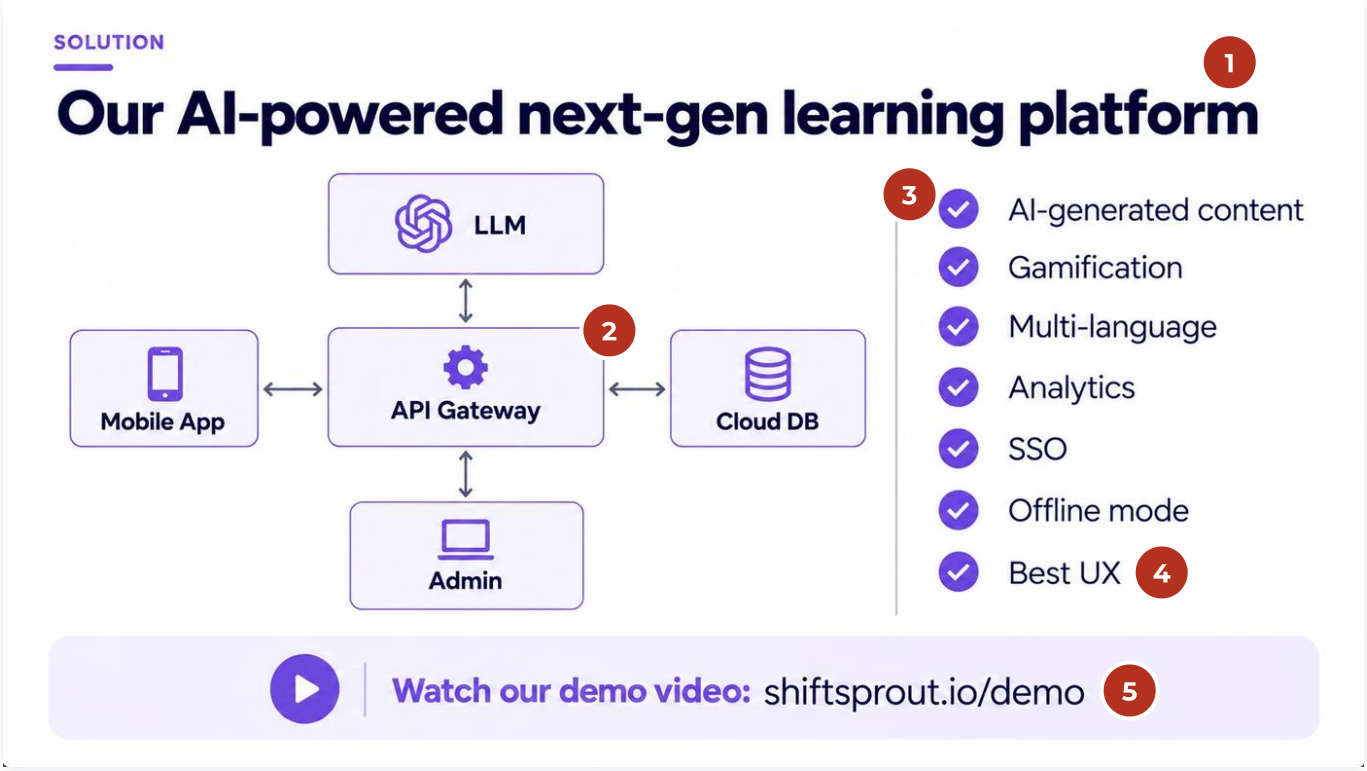


Deep tech. No product to show yet? Show the technology at work where it will be used.

A feature list tells investors nothing about the benefit.

Investors buy a solved problem, not a tech stack. When the slide lists what the product is built from instead of what it does for the customer, the link to the pain on the problem slide breaks. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | buzzwords, architecture, seven features



1. **A buzzword title.** "AI-powered" and "next-gen" say how it is built, not what it does for the customer.
2. **Architecture instead of value.** Boxes and arrows show how it works inside, not what the customer gets.
3. **Seven features, no game changer.** When everything is listed, nothing stands out.
4. **"Best UX" is a claim.** Investors believe what they can see or measure, not adjectives.
5. **A link to a demo video.** Investors should click to the next slide, not leave the deck.

BUSINESS MODEL

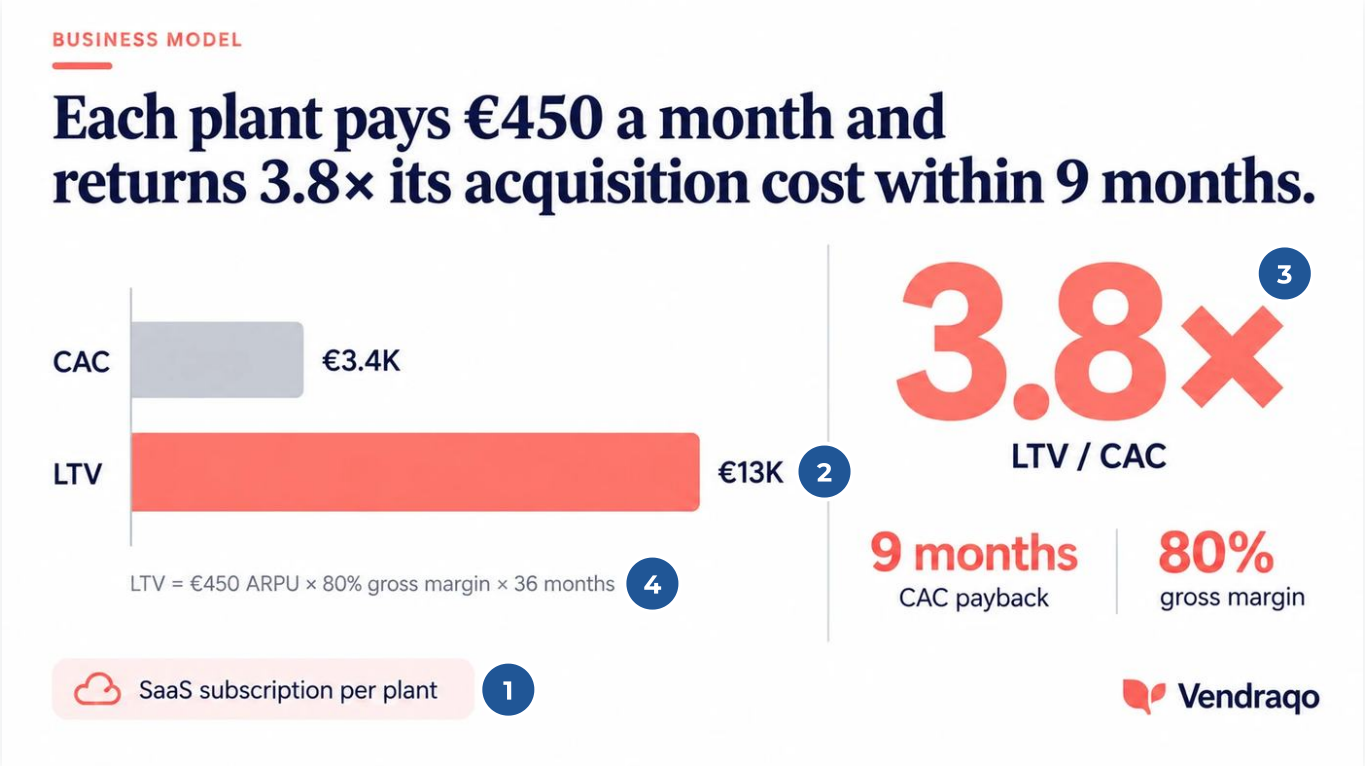
The business model slide shows the math behind every customer.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> **Every customer is worth far more than they cost.**

The business model slide shows whether the startup can become a real business. Show that **every customer brings in far more than it costs** to win them, with the math visible. The LTV (lifetime value: everything a customer pays you over the whole relationship) must be bigger than the CAC (customer acquisition cost: what it costs to win that customer) plus the cost of delivering your product. If it is, you have a working business. If not, you have a working money-burning machine.

✓ DO | Vendraqo: the ratio you can see



1. **The model in one word.** Subscription, transaction fee or hardware + software.
2. **A ratio you can see.** Two bars on the same scale: a short CAC in grey, a long LTV in the accent color.
3. **LTV/CAC as the biggest number.** The payback in months comes second.
4. **One visible formula.** LTV = ARPU (average revenue per user) × gross margin × lifetime. The margin removes delivery costs.

Every business model shows what one unit earns, whatever you sell.

The rule stays the same: one customer, box or deal brings in more than it costs. What changes is the unit you count and where the margin comes from.

✓ DO | Physical product



Physical products. Break the price down to the margin per box, then show the payback.

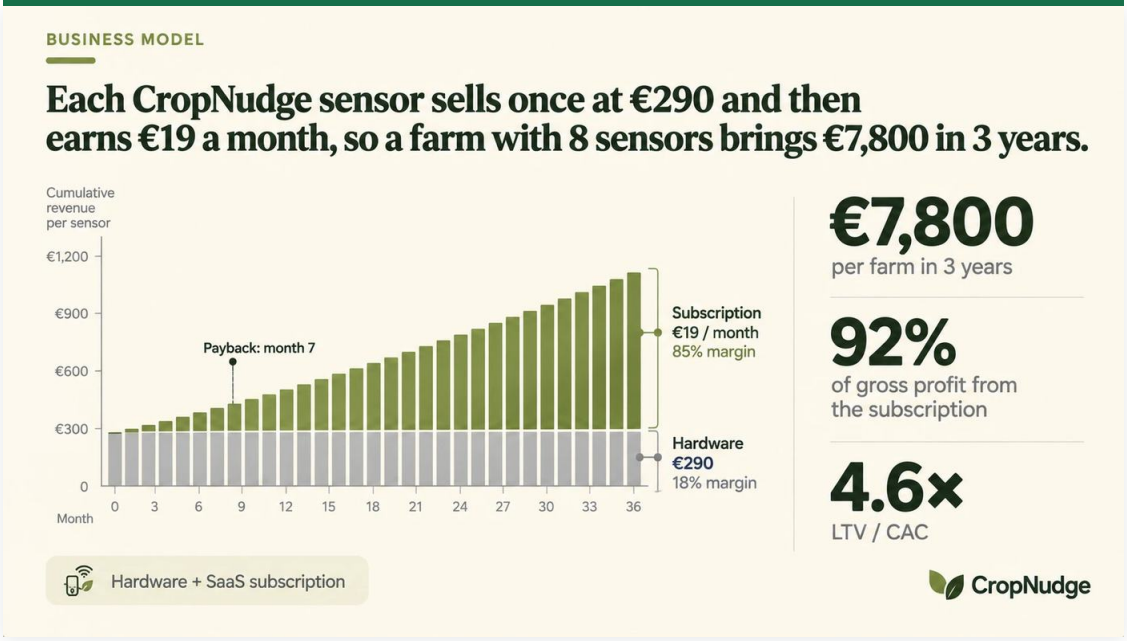
✓ DO | Marketplace



Marketplaces. Show the money flow of one deal and the share you keep.

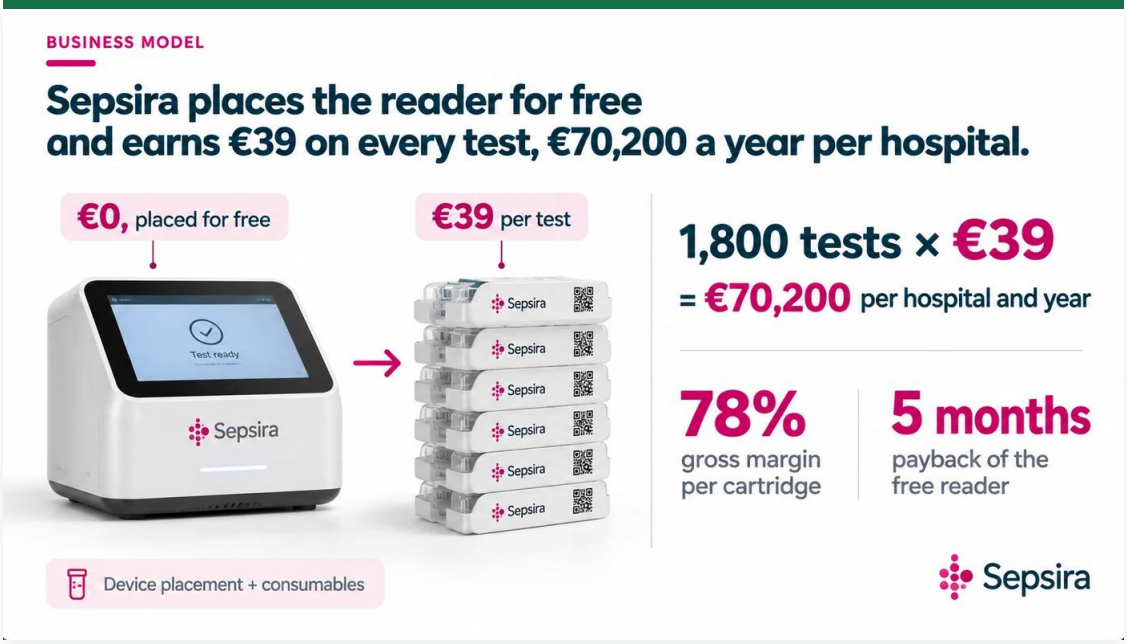
Hardware and consumables show the revenue that keeps coming after the first sale.

✓ DO | Hardware + subscription



Hardware + subscription. The device sells once, the subscription carries the margin.

✓ DO | Consumables



Consumables. Place the device, then earn on every test, cartridge or refill.

A business model canvas shows everything except the math.

Investors want to know whether one customer earns more than it costs to win. A canvas full of text, a price per user and revenue from 2030 answer every question except that one. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | canvas, price tag, 2030 revenue



1. **"Our Business Model" is not a title.** It names the slide instead of saying what the business earns.
2. **A canvas is a text wall.** Nine boxes of small text and no message investors remember.
3. **A price per user.** "From €49 per user" says nothing about what one customer pays in total. A simple pricing table is not enough either.
4. **Revenue from the distant future.** A marketplace from 2030 distracts from the business you run today.
5. **No CAC, no LTV, no margin.** Without unit economics investors cannot tell whether growth earns money or burns it.

GO-TO-MARKET

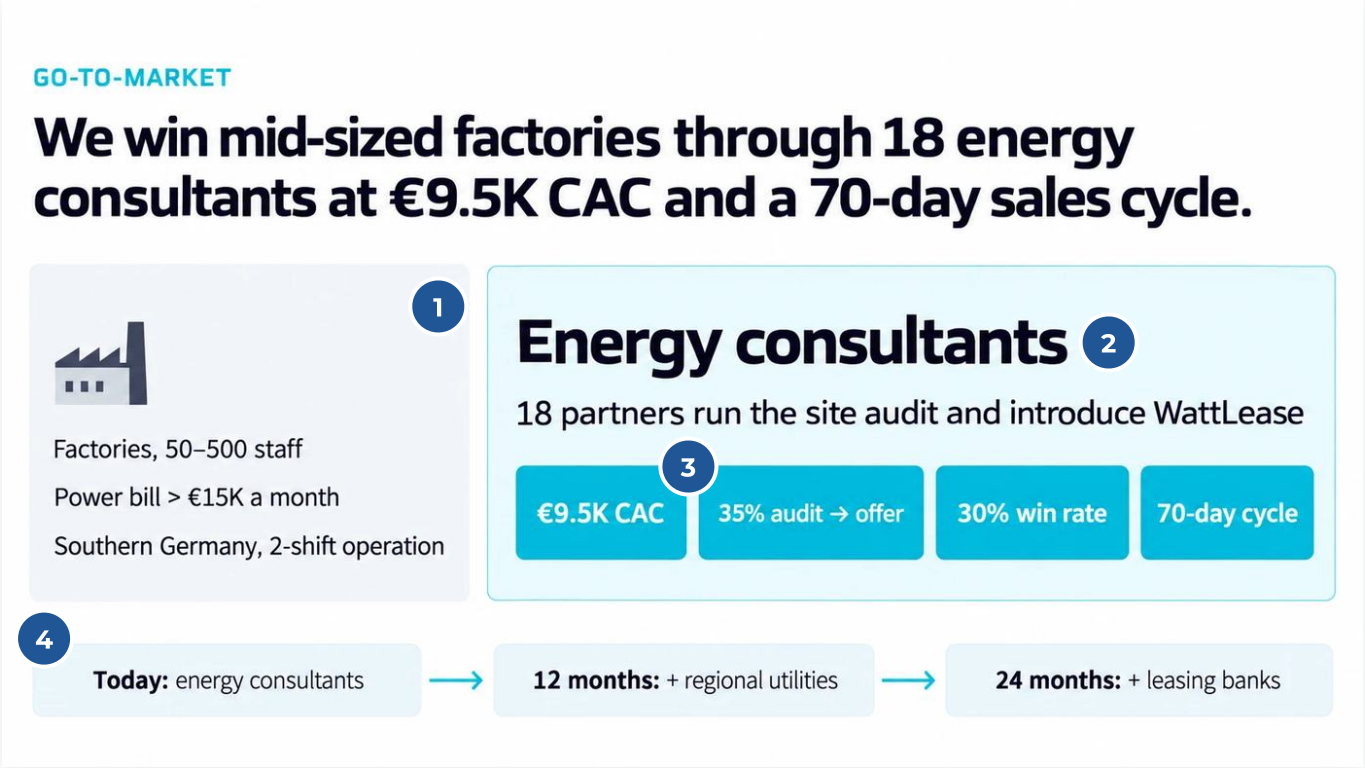
The go-to-market slide proves one repeatable way to win customers.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> **They know exactly how to turn my money into customers.**

A great product without a way to reach customers is not a business. The go-to-market slide proves **one repeatable way to win a sharply defined customer**, with the numbers of that funnel. Think in phases: awareness (how customers hear of you), evaluation (how they decide) and loyalty (why they stay and bring others). Each phase gets the one channel or activity that carries it.

✓ DO | WattLease: one customer, one channel, four numbers



1. **An ICP in three criteria.** ICP (ideal customer profile): industry, size and one extra criterion. Can you name ten such companies?
2. **One main channel.** The one behind your CAC, with four funnel KPIs. Other channels only as "next".
3. **The same CAC as on the business model slide.** One number, the same on every slide.
4. **The evolution in one line.** Today, in 12 months, in 24 months.

Every go-to-market shows how strangers become customers.

The rule stays the same: one sharply defined customer, one repeatable way to win them, with numbers. What changes is which phase carries the growth.

✓ DO | Mewtiva: awareness, evaluation, loyalty, one channel each



Consumer brands. One column per phase, all KPIs at the same height to compare them.

✓ DO | Kontoza: download sources, free-to-paid funnel, referral loop



Apps and freemium. Sort the sources by size and highlight the one that grows by itself.

Marketplaces and enterprise sales show what has to happen first.

✓ DO | Tradora: supply first, then demand, next city by rule



Marketplaces. Number the steps from top to bottom and put the launch rule right next to the map.

✓ DO | Sepsira: pilot to rollout, buying center, conversion



Enterprise sales. Let the step boxes grow from left to right, so the growing deal size is visible.

Every channel at once means no channel that works.

Investors fund a machine that turns money into customers. Nine channels, no target customer and a country timeline show hope instead of that machine. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | nine channels, no ICP, no numbers



1. **"All channels" is hope, not a strategy.** Nine equal icons say that nothing has worked yet.
2. **No ICP at all.** The slide never says who the customer is, so nobody can picture a single company.
3. **The expansion timeline takes center stage.** New countries are the result of a working channel, not the channel itself.
4. **Warm intros and an agency do not scale.** An investor network and an agency cannot be repeated with more money.
5. **Not one number.** No CAC, no conversion rate, no sales cycle, so nothing can be checked.

MARKET

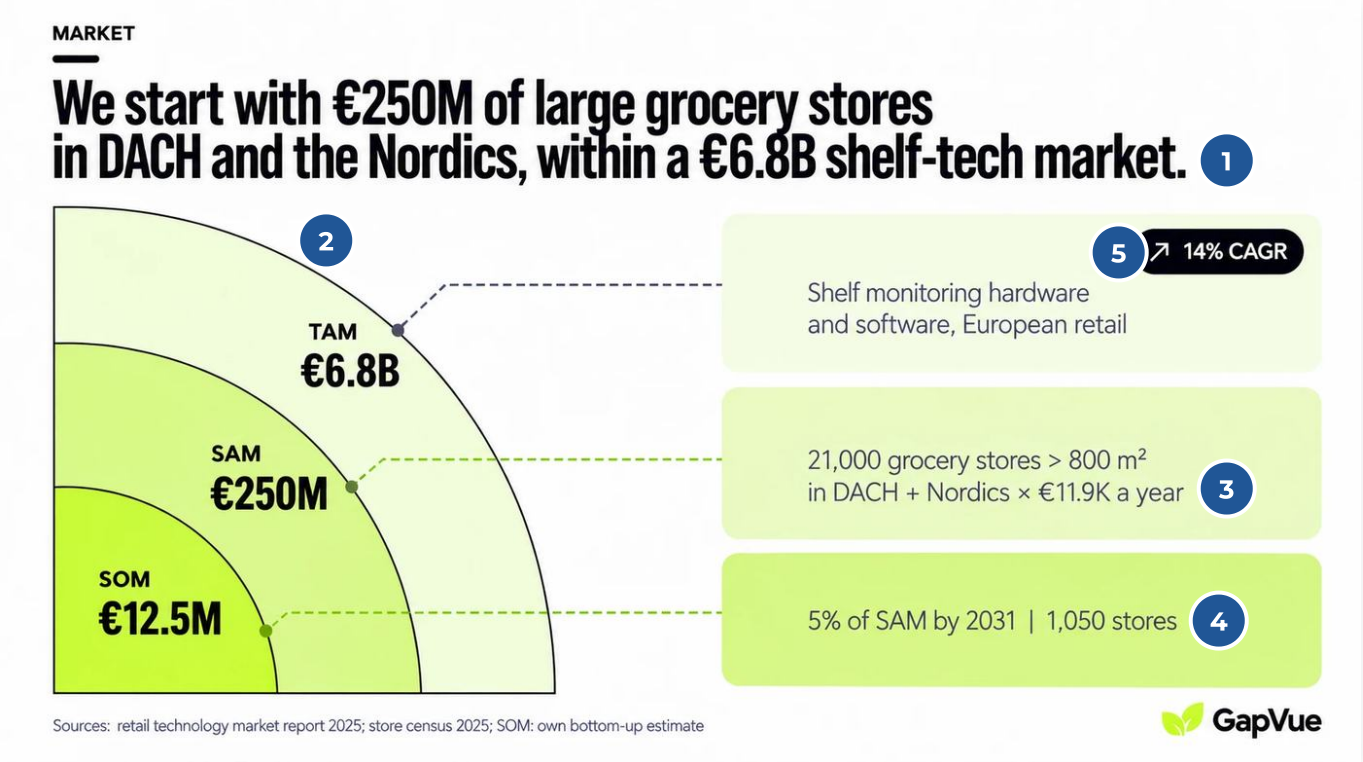
The market slide shows the slice you win first of a big, growing whole.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> **Big, growing, and they know which slice they win first.**

The market slide tells investors whether the startup can grow big enough for a 10x return. Define the market and show **the slice you win first**. TAM (total addressable market) is everyone who could buy, SAM (serviceable addressable market) is the part you reach with your product, and SOM (serviceable obtainable market) is the share you can win in the next five years.

✓ DO | GapVue: nested, named, sourced

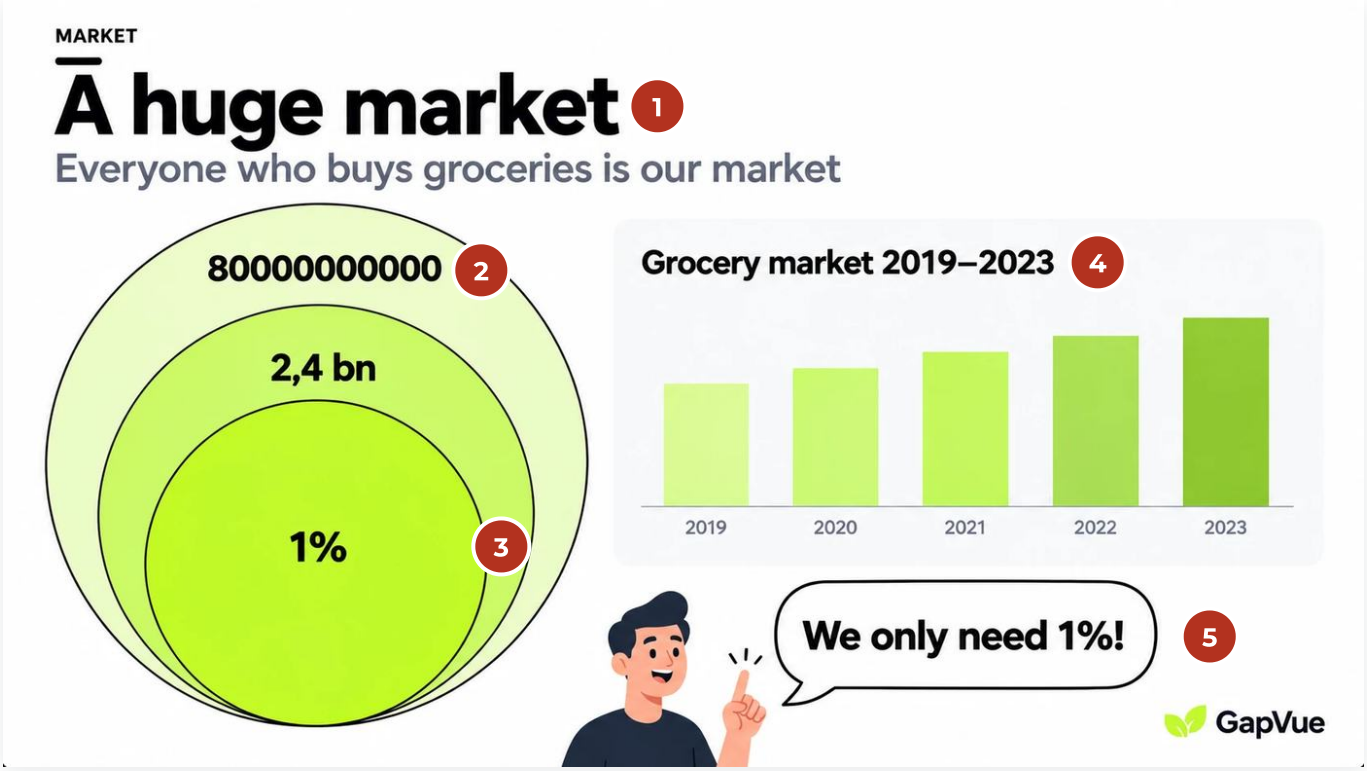


1. **The market defined in the title.** In one sentence that matches your ICP.
2. **Nested quarter circles.** TAM light, SAM medium, SOM in the full accent color.
3. **The narrowing is named.** Region, industry and size explain the step from TAM to SAM.
4. **The SOM with its assumption.** X% of SAM by a given year, realistic at 3 to 10%.
5. **Growth and sources.** A CAGR (compound annual growth rate) badge, sources from the last two years.

"We only need 1%" is the most famous cliché in pitching.

Investors check two things: is the market big enough, and do you know which part you win first. One huge number for everyone, data from the past and a 1% claim answer neither. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | everyone, no currency, 1%



1. **A title that says nothing.** "A huge market" and "everyone who buys groceries" define no customer.
2. **No currency, long numbers, mixed formats.** "80000000000" next to "2,4 bn" forces investors to decode.
3. **A SOM circle almost as big as the TAM.** Distorted sizes disqualify the slide for any investor.
4. **Only data from the past.** 2019 to 2023 says nothing about the market you will sell into.
5. **"We only need 1%!"** Investors want a bottom-up plan, not a share you hope to get.

WAY TO €100M

This slide shows how your niche grows into a €100M+ company.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> **I see how this gets from small to very big.**

Investors do not fund the niche you serve today, they fund the company it can become. Show **three business stages with years and revenue**, so they see how that niche grows into a €100M+ company. The yardstick is ARR (annual recurring revenue): €100M ARR is what makes a €1B valuation believable.

✓ DO | Kontoza: three stages, years, ARR



1. **Calendar years on every stage.** "2028 to 2030", never "year 3".
2. **Column height = ARR.** Three columns growing in height and width. No arrows: the columns are the arrow.
3. **Stage 1 short, stage 3 rich.** Later stages add who, go-to-market and product.
4. **A goal under each column.** The milestone that unlocks the next stage.
5. **The end vision under stage 3.** One sentence on what the company becomes.

A feature roadmap is no plan to grow revenue.

Investors want to see how the business grows, not what the product will be able to do. Nine features on a road, no years and no revenue leave the €100M question open. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | nine features, no years, no revenue



1. **Features instead of business stages.** Dark mode and an API do not tell investors who pays more next year.
2. **No years, no plan.** Without calendar years nobody can check whether the plan is on track.
3. **No revenue per stage.** The slide is called a way to €100M and shows no euro at all.
4. **Numbered stops waste space.** Left to right already shows the order.
5. **"Revolutionize" and "world domination".** Hype words replace an operating plan.

COMPETITION

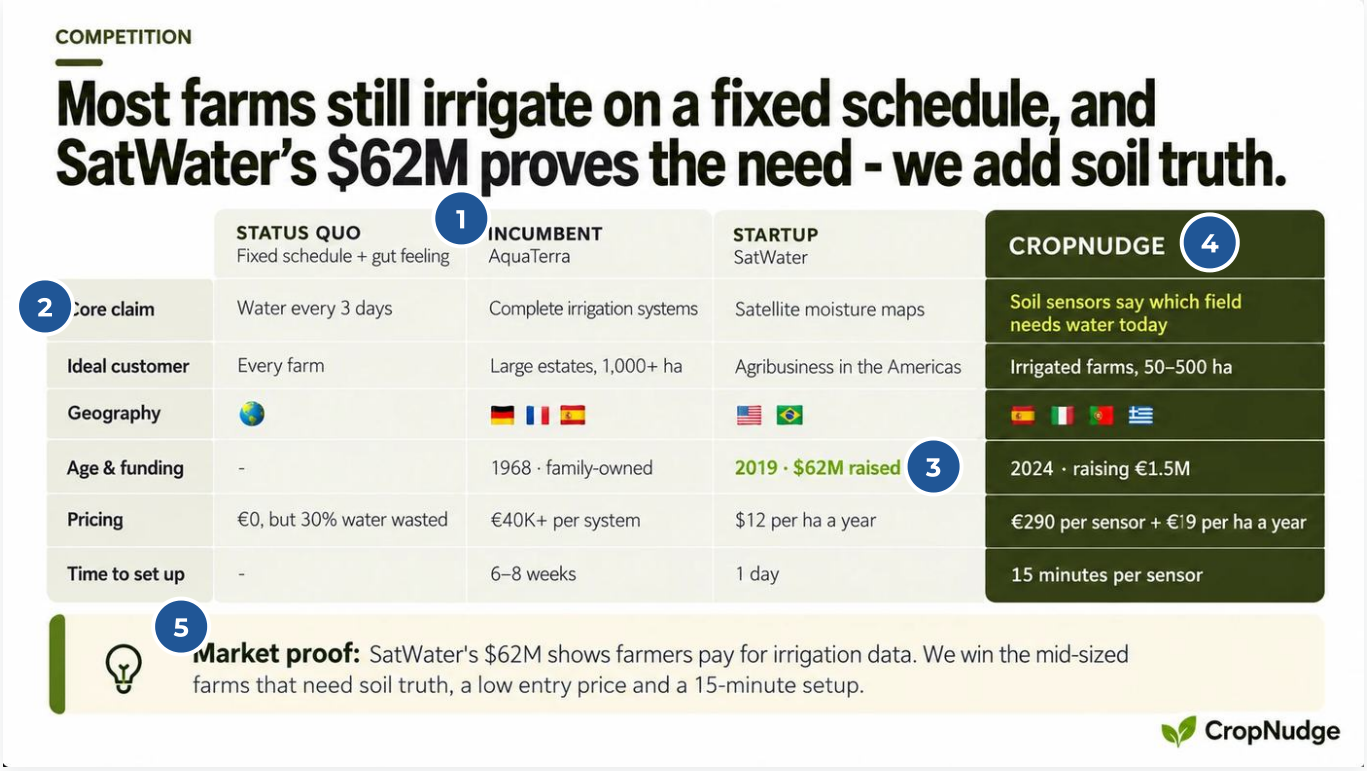
The competition slide shows where you win and why it lasts.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> **They know the field, and their spot is defensible.**

Investors know the field before the meeting, so this slide tests how well you know it. Show that **funded rivals prove the market exists** and where your position is defensible. Always count the status quo as a competitor: Excel, email or doing nothing is what most customers use today.

✓ DO | CropNudge: status quo, rivals, one clear spot



1. **The status quo as a competitor.** Excel, email or doing nothing gets its own column.
2. **Strategic rows, not features.** Claim, customer, region, funding, pricing and setup time.
3. **Funding as market proof.** Rival funding in the accent color shows that the market pays.
4. **Your column as the anchor.** Dark, slightly wider and on the right.
5. **One insight line.** Market proof first, then the slice you win and why.

"We have no competition" tells investors there is no market.

Investors know the field before the meeting. A slide without named rivals, your logo alone in the top-right corner and a feature table full of your checks shows that you do not. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | no rivals, top-right corner, feature checks



1. **"No competition" disqualifies you.** Either there is no market, or you have not looked.
2. **Alone in the upper-right corner.** A huge empty gap to everyone else looks naive, not strong.
3. **Competitors as logos without names.** Nobody can look up an icon, so investors cannot check the field.
4. **Axes that do not belong together.** "Customer-centric" and "quality" are claims, not measurable dimensions.
5. **Your 2028 features against their product of today.** Compare what exists now, or the table is fiction.

TRACTION

The traction slide proves momentum with hard numbers over time.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> **This is not only an idea, it's already a business, and it is accelerating.**

Traction is one of the most important slides in the deck. It shows where the startup really stands and which hypotheses you already validated, so you can build a real business with the investor's money. Traction metrics prove that you found out what works. Show **momentum over time** with hard numbers, ideally led by MRR (monthly recurring revenue) and MoM (month-over-month growth).

✓ DO | Vendraqo: MRR over 12 months, five KPIs, a quote in €

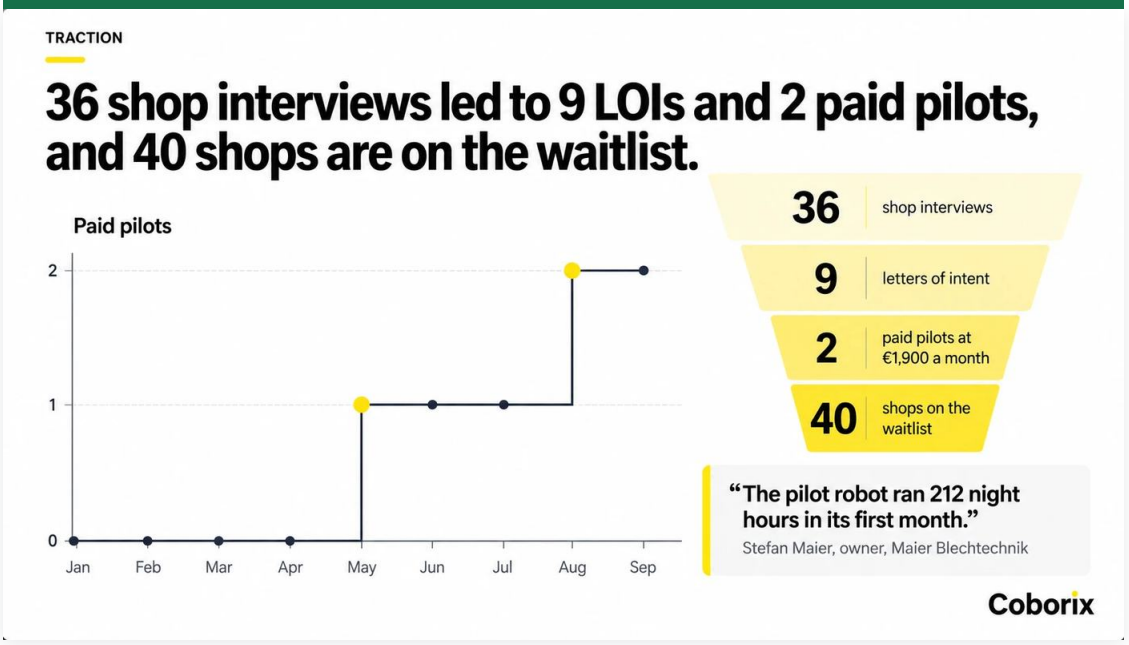


1. **Growth in the title.** The number and the speed: "€18K MRR at 18% a month".
2. **A time axis with real data points.** A rising curve makes the investor brain extend it on its own, and that is exactly what you want.
3. **Today highlighted.** The latest point is bigger and carries its value.
4. **Two to five hard KPIs.** The ones that fit your model, for example retention or CAC payback.
5. **A testimonial with € and a full name.** "Saves us €87 per request", never "great tool".

Before revenue, traction means proof that someone will pay.

The rule stays the same: show hard evidence over time. What changes is the evidence you have: pilots, milestones or cohorts instead of revenue.

✓ DO | Coborix: interviews, LOIs, paid pilots, waitlist



Pre-revenue. Order the evidence by hardness and draw pilots as steps, not a curve.

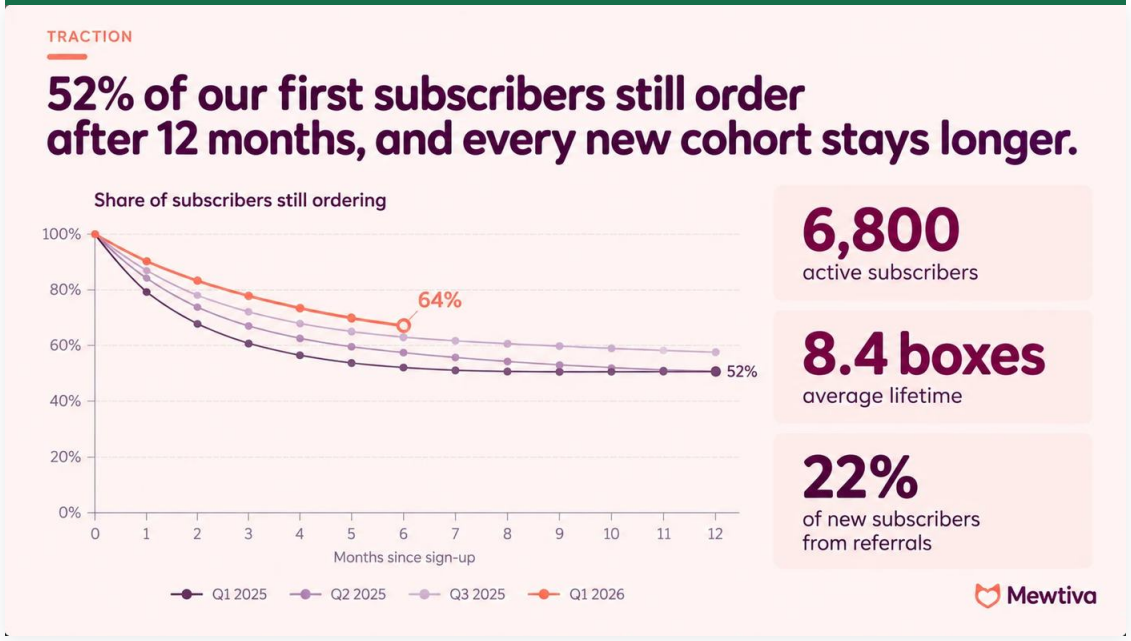
✓ DO | Ferrolith: technical milestones and first agency contracts



Deep tech. Put milestones on a real time axis and mark the ones that are paid.

Consumer apps and enterprise sales show what predicts revenue.

✓ DO | Mewtiva: subscriber cohorts that flatten out



Consumer and PLG. Show all cohorts on one chart, the newest in the accent color.

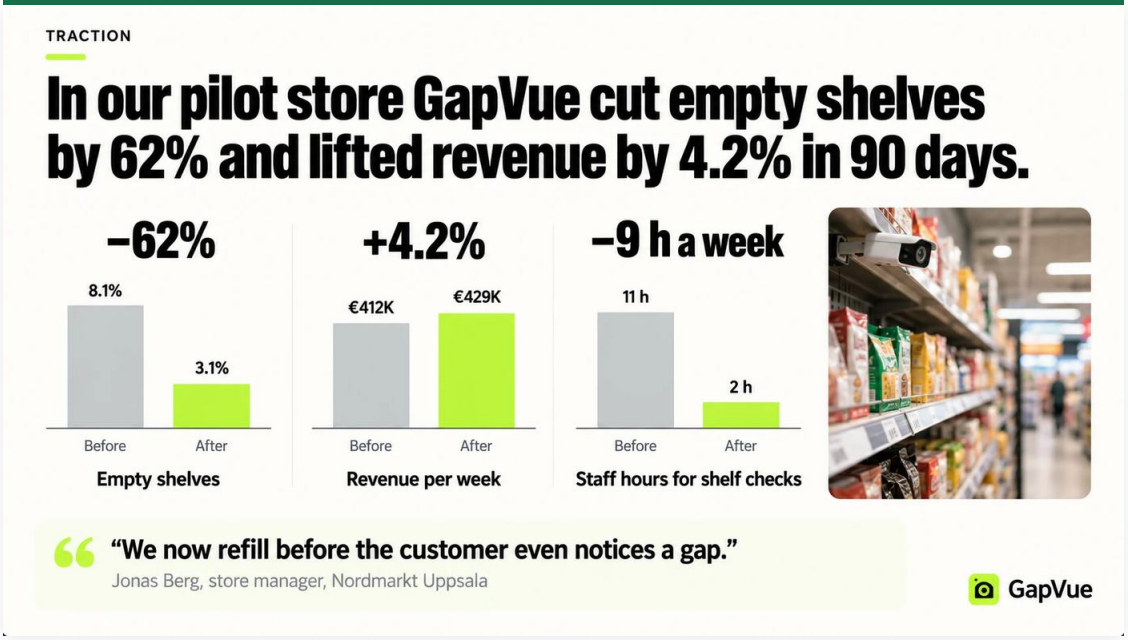
✓ DO | Sepsira: pipeline by stage with weighted value



Enterprise sales. Stages from left to right, euros per stage, the weighted total as the hero.

With few customers, show depth instead of breadth.

✓ DO | GapVue: one pilot store before and after



Few, strong customers. Before and after side by side on the same scale, the quote below.

✓ DO | WattLease: signed partners, their reach, first deals



Partner-led sales. Show the reach of each partner and the deals it already brought.

Followers and planned revenue are not traction.

Investors look for momentum they can check. Vanity numbers, a paragraph full of claims and revenue that has not happened yet give them nothing to check. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | vanity numbers, claims, planned revenue



1. **"Tremendous growth" without a number.** The title claims momentum and proves none.
2. **Followers and downloads.** Vanity metrics say nothing about who pays.
3. **Planned revenue.** €400K "assuming 100 clients" is a hope, not traction.
4. **The real signal hidden in a paragraph.** "60+ potential clients" disappears in the text.
5. **No time axis.** A snapshot like "12K downloads" shows no direction. A curve over time is far more convincing.

TEAM

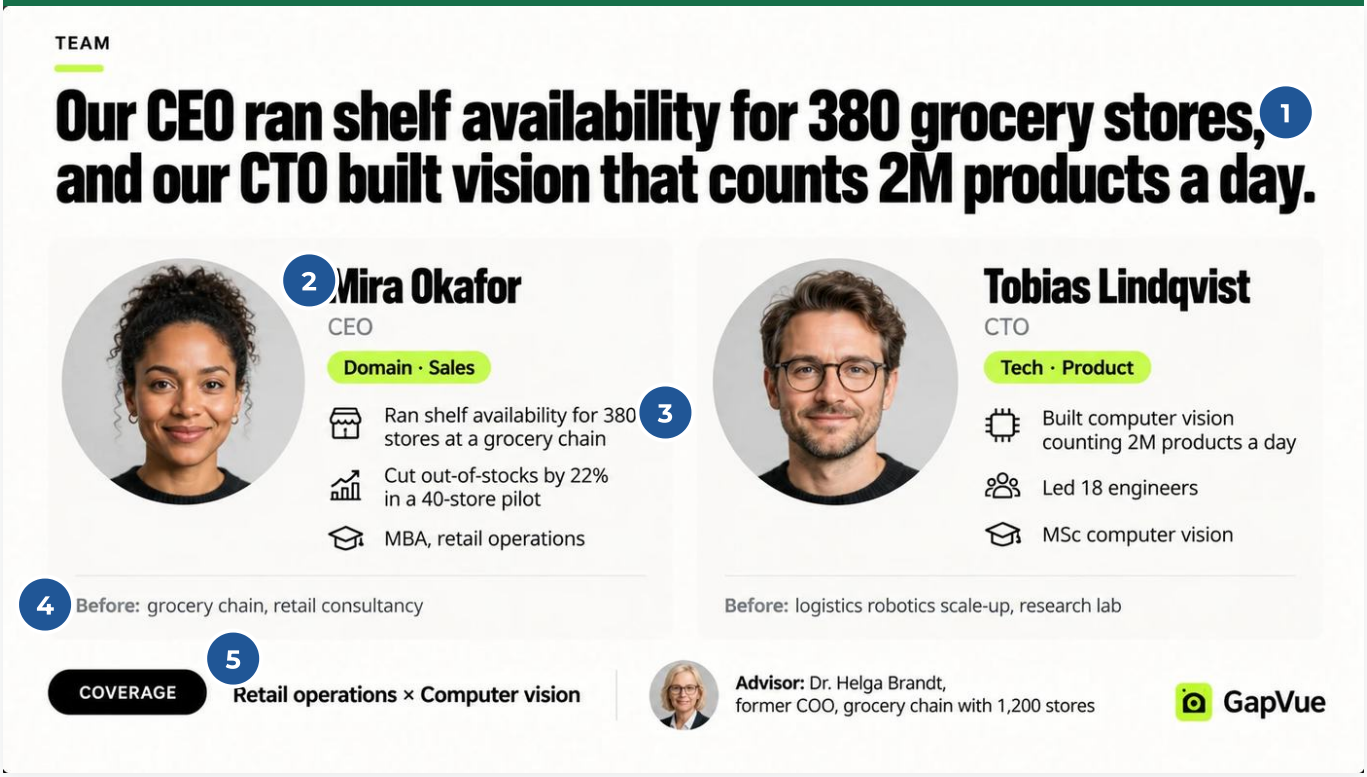
The team slide proves why exactly these people will win.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> **If anyone can win this, it's these people.**

At an early stage the team is often the main reason investors say yes, because the plan will change and the people stay. The team slide proves **founder-market fit**: the unfair advantage exactly these people have for exactly this problem.

✓ DO | GapVue: two founders, three achievements each

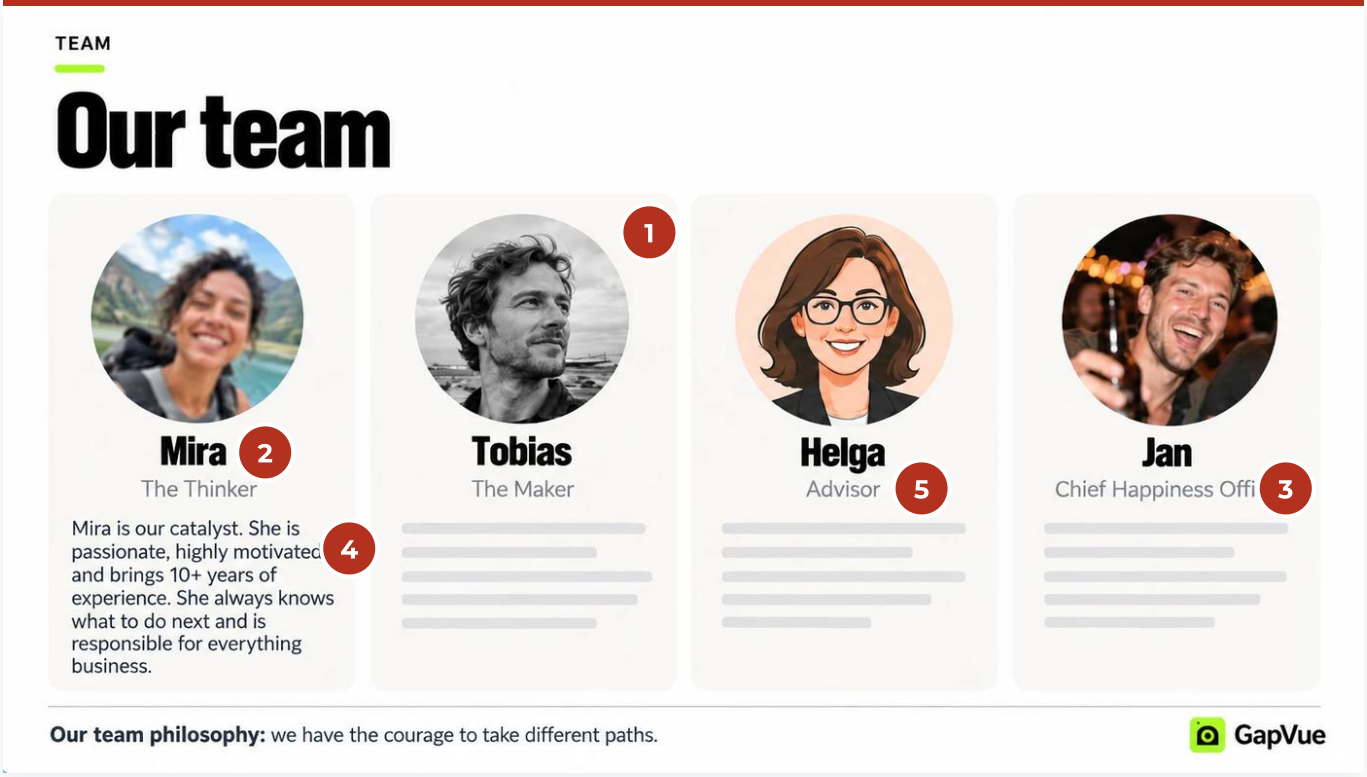


1. **Founder-market fit in the title.** What these people did before that makes them win here.
2. **Uniform photos.** Same background, light and crop, full names and standard titles like CEO or CTO.
3. **Three achievements with numbers.** The link to this problem, proof of scale and one expertise anchor.
4. **Former employers.** A "Before:" line with names investors recognize.
5. **Coverage row, advisors small.** Which skills the team covers, at most three advisors, never invented.

"Passionate" and "10+ years of experience" prove nothing.

Investors want to know why exactly these people will win. Mixed photos, first names, invented titles and clichés make them guess, and advisors as big as founders blur who does the work. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | four photo styles, first names, clichés



1. **Photos in four styles.** A selfie, a cartoon and a party photo look like nobody planned the slide.
2. **First names only.** Investors cannot find you on LinkedIn.
3. **Invented titles.** "The Thinker" and "Chief Happiness Officer" instead of CEO and CTO.
4. **Claims instead of proof.** "Passionate" and "10+ years of experience" say nothing about this problem.
5. **Advisors as big as founders.** It stays unclear who actually builds the company.

FUNDING

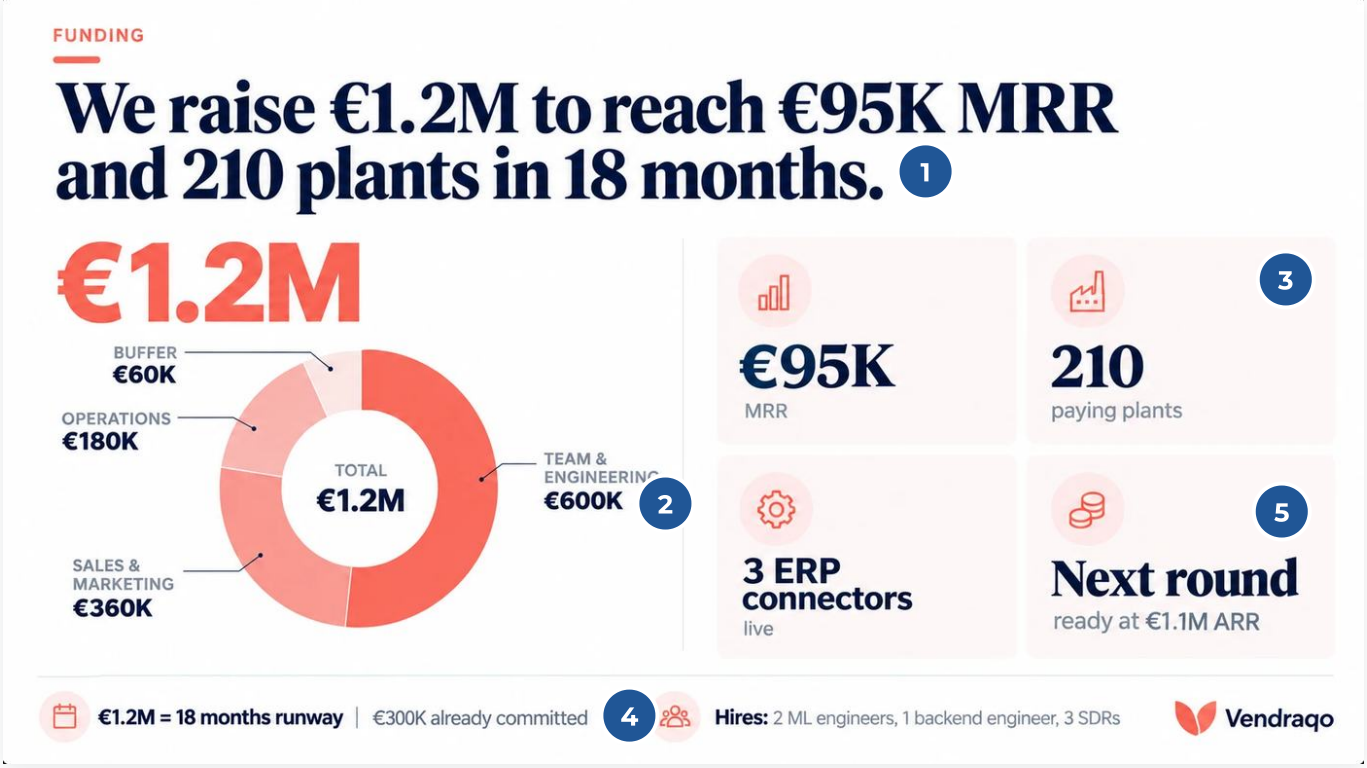
The funding slide shows what the money buys and by when.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> **Clear ask, clear plan, and the company is worth much more afterwards.**

The funding slide turns the whole story into a concrete deal. Show how much you raise, what it pays for and **which measurable milestones** make the company worth more afterwards. Runway is the number of months the money lasts, usually 12 to 24.

✓ DO | Vendraqo: amount, use of funds in €, milestones



1. **Amount, milestones and time in the title.** "We raise €1.2M to reach €95K MRR and 210 plants in 18 months."
2. **Use of funds in euros.** A donut with four segments and € labels, never percentages.
3. **Measurable milestones.** MRR, customers, product stage and readiness for the next round.
4. **Runway and committed capital.** How long the money lasts and who already said yes.
5. **The next round by its condition.** "Ready at €1.1M ARR", not just a label like "Series A".

Percentages and "market leadership" leave investors guessing what they buy.

Investors want to know what their money turns into. A pie chart in percent, vague goals and a ten-year plan to the exit answer everything except that. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | percent pie, vague goals, exit timeline



1. **Too much, too early.** €5M at this stage raises doubts before anyone reads on.
2. **Round and instrument labels.** "Seed" and "SAFE" say nothing about what the money does.
3. **Percentages only.** Investors have to do the math, and "Other 25%" hides the plan.
4. **Goals without numbers.** "Market leader" and "scaling" are no milestones.
5. **A ten-year plan to the exit.** Early profitability and "Exit 2033" are promises nobody believes.

CALL TO ACTION

The last slide asks for one clear next step.

WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD THINK

> I want to talk to them, now.

The last slide decides what happens after the pitch: a meeting or silence. End with a confident headline and **one clear next step**, a 15-minute call. It is the only dark slide in the deck, which signals that the pitch is over and the conversation starts.

✓ DO | Vendraqo: mission headline, booking link, one emotional image



1. **A mission headline.** The largest text, pointing back to what you promised on the cover.
2. **The booking link first.** A 15-minute slot, large and in the accent color.
3. **The email second.** Smaller, for everyone who does not book right away.
4. **A referral ask.** "Not the right fit? Who in your network should see this?"
5. **One image that carries the mission.** An emotional photo of the world your product creates, not decoration.

"Thank you" ends the pitch without a next step.

The last slide stays on screen the longest, often during the whole Q&A. Confetti, four contact options and a QR code waste that moment instead of asking for the call. Every number marks one mistake.

✗ DON'T | thank you, confetti, four contacts, QR code



1. **"Thank you" is not a call to action.** It closes the conversation instead of starting the next one.
2. **"We hope" sounds unsure.** Confident founders ask for the next step.
3. **Decoration instead of a message.** Confetti says nothing. One image that shows your mission would.
4. **Four contact options.** Two phones and two emails mean no clear next step.
5. **QR code and social icons.** They pull attention away from the one thing you want investors to do.

BOLDER ALTERNATIVES

Go bolder with words, never with numbers.

Investors hear the same kind of traction many times a week. In one deck it sounds like a useful tool, in the next like a new category. The difference is the frame: the category you claim, the reference you compare with and the mission you name.



LEVER	SAFE	BOLD
Category claim	"quote comparison in 20 minutes"	"as simple as a Google search"
Default logic	"€1.1B segment"	"the unclaimed €1.1B default layer"
Mission language	"a procurement tool"	"the infrastructure for supplier quotes"
Bigger reference	"saves buyers 5 hours per quote round"	"gives a whole profession its Friday back"
Next generation	"faster than email and Excel"	"the generation after Excel"
Psychological edge	"quote tracking"	"the proof that every euro was negotiated well"

SAFE VS. BOLD

The same Vendraqo deck, told ten times bigger.

Every Vendraqo title twice: left as it stands in this guide, right with a bigger frame around the same facts. Use the bold line where it holds up when an investor asks for the number behind it.

SLIDE	SAFE	BOLD, SAME NUMBERS
Cover	Vendraqo turns a 5-hour quote round into a 20-minute job.	Vendraqo makes supplier quotes **as simple as a Google search**: 20 minutes instead of 5 hours.
Problem	Plant buyers lose €41K a year chasing quotes by email.	Every plant buyer works as **an unpaid email router**, for €41K a year.
Solution	Vendraqo's AI agent collects and compares every quote.	Vendraqo is **the colleague who never forgets** to chase a supplier.
Business model	€450 a month, 3.8 times its acquisition cost.	**Every euro we spend on sales comes back 3.8 times.**
Go-to-market	LinkedIn outreach at €3.4K acquisition cost.	One LinkedIn message starts **the path to a paying plant**.
Market	A €1.1B DACH segment of an €8.4B market.	The **unclaimed €1.1B default layer** of DACH procurement.
Way to €100M	From DACH machinery to Europe's quote default by 2032.	From one buyer's inbox to **the operating system** for European supplier quotes.
Competition	Excel still owns this job.	Our real competitor is Excel, and **Excel has never been easier to beat**.
Traction	€18K MRR, 40 plants.	40 plants already pay, and **every month more procurement** runs through Vendraqo.
Team	A former head of procurement and a quote-extraction engineer.	**The buyer who lived the pain** and the engineer who automated it.
Funding	€1.2M to reach €95K MRR and 210 plants.	€1.2M turns 40 plants into 210, and Vendraqo into **the category default**.
Call to action	Let's make supplier quotes a 20-minute job.	Let's give every buyer in Europe **their Friday back**.

WANT THIS FOR YOUR STARTUP?
We build your whole deck for free.
SCAN OR CLICK





BEYOND YOUR DECK

The deck opens the door, the rest keeps it open.

The deck gets you the meeting. What decides the round happens around it: a newsletter that warms investors up, no NDA, answers sent before the call, a meeting you lead and a data room that is ready.

INVESTOR NEWSLETTER

Warm up investors months before you ask.

Investors would rather back a team whose progress they have followed for months than one that wrote to them yesterday. A short update every month builds that trust with every investor on your list at once, long before the round opens.

ELEMENT	EXAMPLE FROM VENDRAQO
Elevator pitch	"A quick reminder: Vendraqo turns a 5-hour quote round into a 20-minute job."
Highlights	"€18K MRR and 40 plants, the first one in Austria."
Lowlights	"The ERP release slipped by two weeks. We now test every release with three plants first."
Learnings	"Buyers with more than 50 suppliers sign twice as fast as smaller ones."
Ask	"Who knows the head of procurement at a machinery group in Bavaria?"
Thanks	"Thank you, Jana, for the intro to our first plant in Switzerland."
Next steps	"Launch the ERP integration and reach 50 plants." Next month you show if you made it.

THE INNER CIRCLE MESSAGE

"We need neither money nor a meeting right now. But you could join our inner circle." It asks for nothing, which is why investors answer. Send real updates for at least one or two months before you ask for a ticket.

1. **Results, not activities.** "Ten new customers" beats "we started a sales initiative".
2. **Lowlights make it credible.** Only highlights read like PR and get ignored like PR.
3. **Grow the list after every call.** "Is it fine if we keep you posted?" Almost nobody says no.

Ideas are cheap, execution is not.

A request for a non-disclosure agreement before the first call ends many conversations before they start. Professional investors almost never sign one at this stage, and the request itself tells them how the founder thinks about the business.

1. **Execution decides.** Several teams work on every good idea anyway. What protects you is speed, not a contract.
2. **Investors do not copy.** They see hundreds of ideas a year and have no time to build one of them themselves.
3. **Discretion is their business.** A good investor's reputation depends on treating founders' information with care.
4. **It signals inexperience.** Asking for an NDA before the first call shows that you do not know how fundraising works.

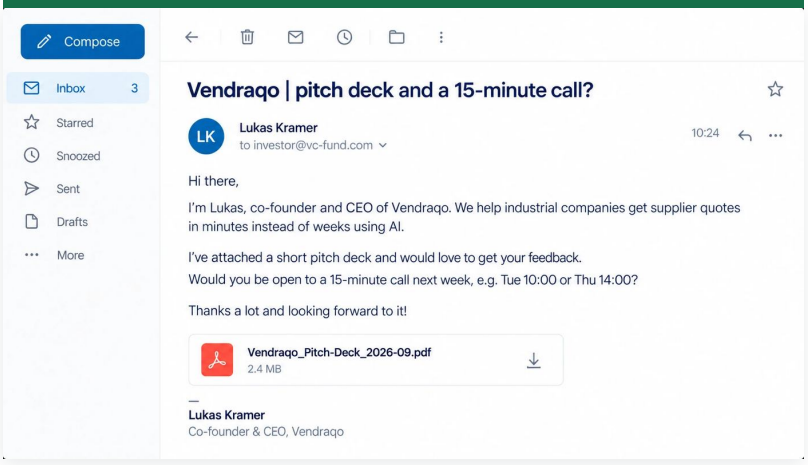
SHARE FREELY

- Everything you would show at a conference
- The pitch deck and a video pitch
- Customer names that are public anyway

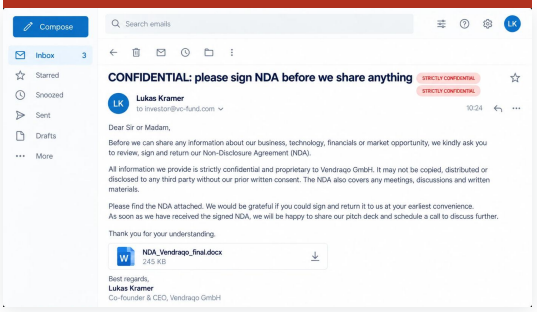
KEEP FOR THE DATA ROOM

- Code and technical details
- Contracts and prices of single customers
- The cap table and shareholder agreement

✓ DO | deck attached, call proposed



✗ DON'T | NDA before the deck



WHEN AN NDA MAKES SENSE

Only for the most sensitive level of the data room: technical documentation, unpublished patents and employee data. See page 91.

INVESTOR FAQ

Answer the questions before they are asked.

Most investors ask the same questions. Answer them in writing and send the link two or three days before the meeting. The facts are settled beforehand, and the meeting has time for what decides an angel investment: **the personal connection.**

TOPIC	QUESTIONS TO PREPARE
Business model	How do you make money? What does a customer cost you? What is their lifetime value?
Competition	Which competitor do you fear most? Why can they not copy you?
Unique edge	What do you know that others do not? Why is nobody doing this yet?
Customers	What do they value most? How do they find you?
Marketing and sales	Which channels work best? What is your conversion rate? How long is the sales cycle?
Market	Where else can you expand? Which obstacles do you see?
Team	What was your biggest mistake so far? What was the worst thing that happened?
Finances	What is your monthly burn? Which figures do you steer by? When can you be profitable?
Fundraising	What valuation? Who is already in this round? What is the money for? Which milestones?

THE ANSWER FORMULA

Fact, context, advantage. "One plant pays us €450 a month and costs us €3.4K to win. It pays that back in eight months." Every answer becomes a small pitch.

1. **Add the uncomfortable questions.** They prove that you are ready for the hard part.
2. **Share a cloud link, not a PDF.** A link stays current, a PDF is outdated from day one.
3. **Update it after every call.** Every new question makes the next meeting better.

Lead the first meeting and end it with a next step.

The deck gets you 30 minutes. Their goal is not an instant yes, but an investor who wants to continue with you. Propose the structure yourself: "I prepared a structure that worked well in earlier calls. Is that fine for you?"

THE AGENDA FOR 30 MINUTES

1. **Relevant small talk.** Their latest investment, podcast or event shows that you did your homework.
2. **The pitch question.** "Shall I briefly present, or do we go straight to your questions?"
3. **Questions and answers.** Calm and concrete, as practiced with your FAQ. If you do not know, say so and follow up.
4. **Your questions to the investor.** How do they work with startups, how available are they, what do they value? You choose, too.
5. **A concrete next step.** Data room access, a call with your co-founders or a reference call with a customer.

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Read their interviews, posts and portfolio, not only LinkedIn.
- Run a mock meeting with the hard questions from your FAQ.
- Go alone. The team joins in the second meeting.

THE QUESTION THAT CHANGES THE MOOD

"Suppose you invested: what would a good collaboration look like for you?" The investor stops thinking about if and starts thinking about how.

IF IT IS A NO

"Do you know investors who would like to see our deck?" And offer your newsletter, so they can follow your progress.

Build the data room before you need it.

Investors notice how fast you answer follow-up questions. A founder who sends the right link within minutes scores before a single number is read. A cloud folder in three levels is enough.

1 Open

Anyone who asks

Pitch deck, one-pager, video pitch

2 After the meeting

Serious interest

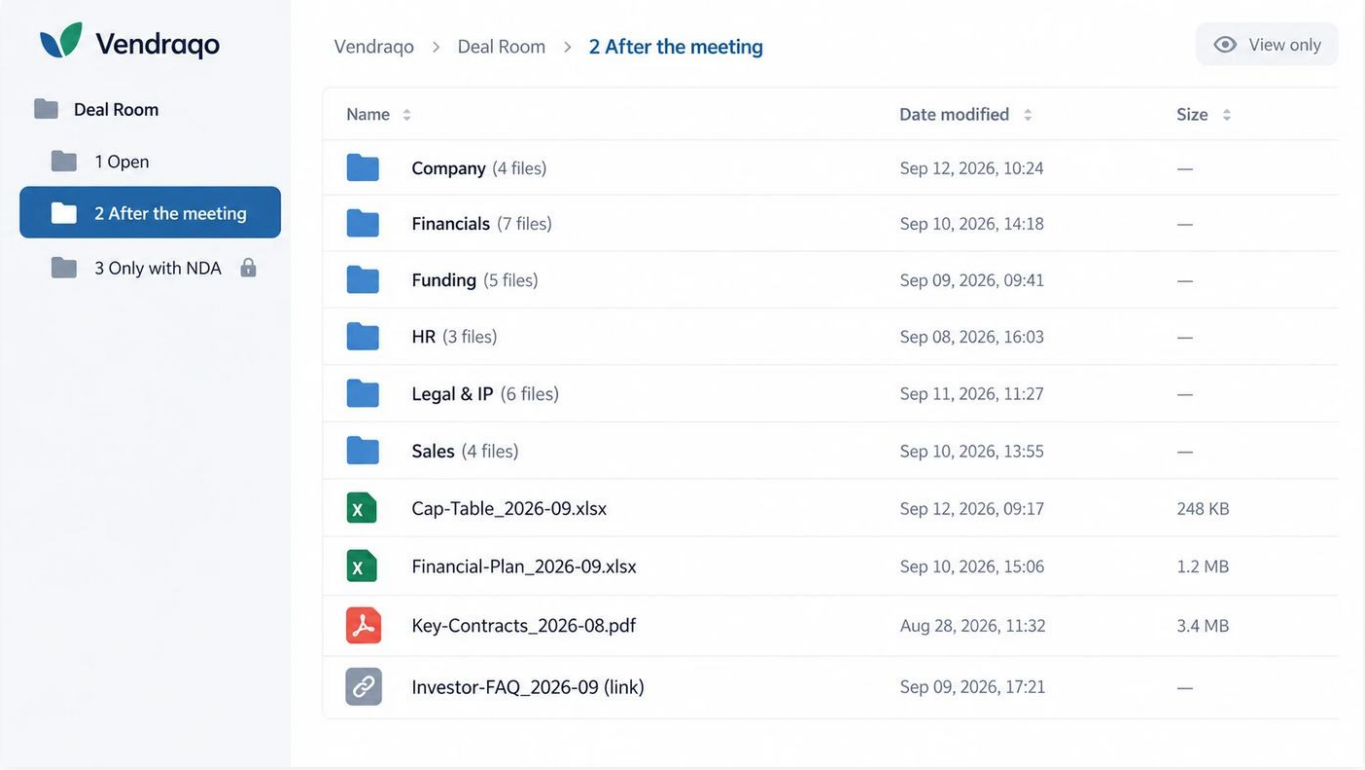
Cap table, key contracts, financial plan, previous rounds, FAQ

3 Only with NDA

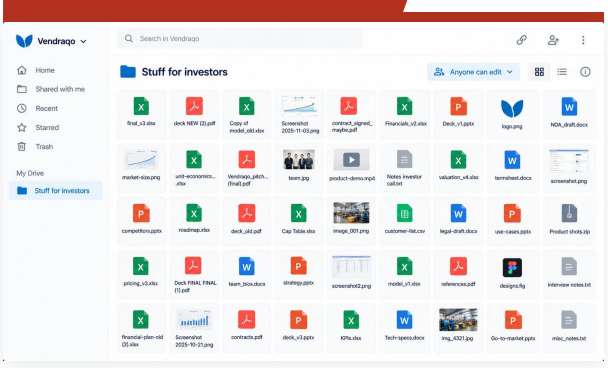
Due diligence

Technical documentation, unpublished patents, employee data

✓ DO | three levels, clear folders, content first and date last



✗ DON'T | one folder, final_v3



HOUSE RULES

1. **Read-only access.** Nobody edits your files.
2. **One folder per level.** Share folders, never single files.
3. **Content first, date last.** "Financial-Plan_2026-09.xlsx"
4. **Update monthly.** Old reports are worse than none.



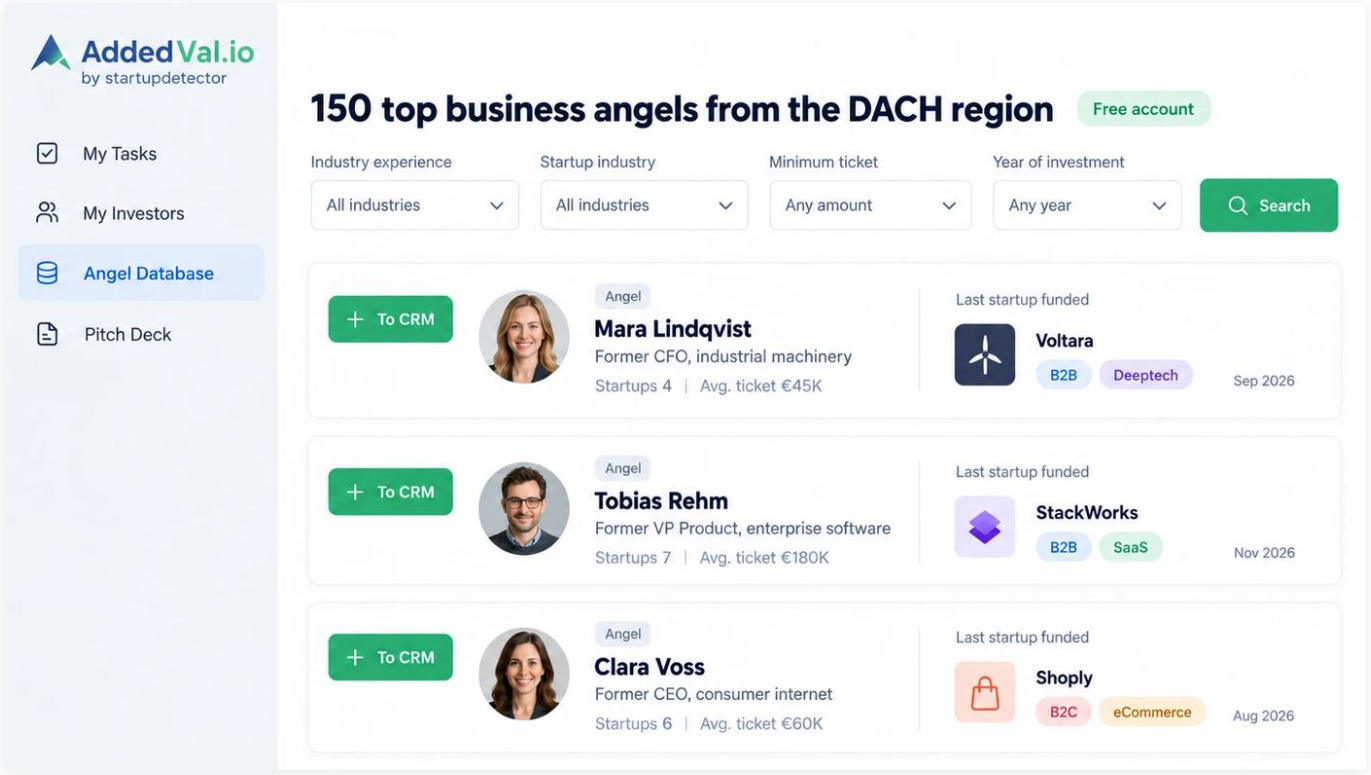
DIRTY SHORTCUTS

You can do all of this alone. The question is whether you want to.

Your time as founder is the most valuable currency in your startup. These shortcuts get you to a closed round faster: with investors who really fit, a stronger position in every negotiation and more time for your business.

Start your round weeks earlier, for free.

Our philosophy is **#givingforward**: as much value as possible, free of charge. Skip weeks of preparation and start with a plan, a shortlist and a ready deck.



150 top angels

Your first shortlist in minutes instead of weeks of research, with angels who actually invest.

Investor CRM

Every follow-up on time, so warm contacts turn into meetings.

Your fundraising plan

The right round size and timing, so you raise enough and give away less.

Pitch deck quick check

Fix what investors would miss before they see it, and start every first call stronger.

START FOR FREE

Create your free account at AddedVal.io

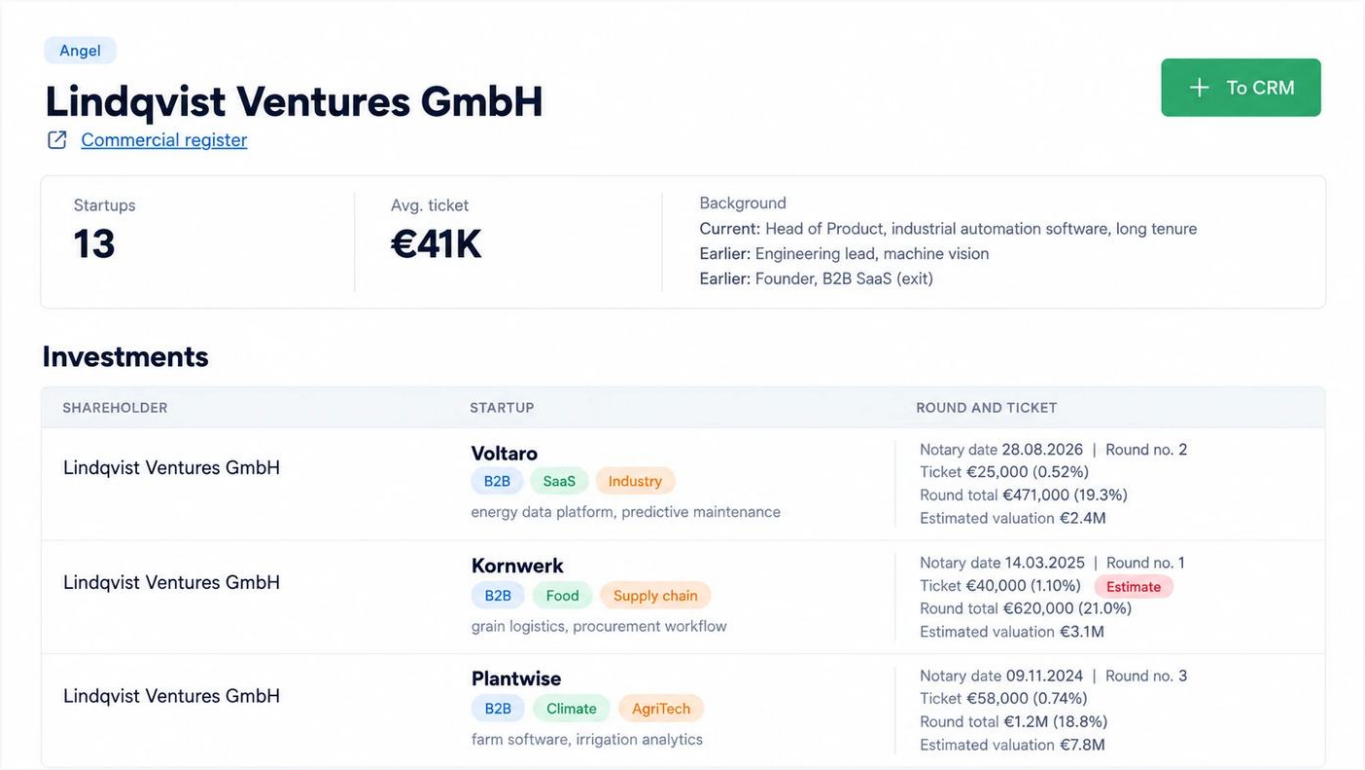
We also build your whole deck for free, see page 6.

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INVESTOR DATABASE

Find the angels who invest in startups like yours.

Many founders write to investors who never invest in their stage, industry or ticket size, and wonder why nobody replies. Our database shows who fits **before you write the first message**.



10,000+ business angels

More investors who fit: more meetings, more interest and a real choice.

Their background

Angels who know your industry understand your deck faster and bring more than money.

AI matching

Your pipeline stays full, so your round builds momentum instead of stalling.

Family offices and VCs

When your next round comes, you already know who to talk to.

SEE WHO FITS

Search the database at AddedVal.io

Spend your time in investor meetings, not in the commercial register.

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FUNDRAISING AS A TEAM

We find and approach the investors, you run the meetings.

The hardest part of fundraising is finding, selecting and approaching the right investors, hundreds of times, personally and with a real match. We take that part off your hands, so your round closes faster, with investors who fit and a better valuation.



HOW WE SPLIT THE WORK

1 Matching

We select the angels who fit your startup best.

2 Intros

We make the first contact with every one of them.

3 Follow-ups

You follow up, because nobody else should.

4 Meetings

You meet the investors, prepared with our guidance.

1:1 support

A sharper story and a stronger position: more interest, a better valuation, less dilution.

Paid on success

We only earn when your round closes. Our goal is yours: a full, ideally oversubscribed round.

TALK TO US

Book a call at AddedVal.io

We check together how fast your round can close with the right investors.

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YOUR NEXT STEP

Your deck is ready. Now find the investors for it.

Your free AddedVal.io account is the first step to a shorter fundraising process, better investors, a higher valuation and, with the right momentum, an oversubscribed round.

Sign up for free at AddedVal.io

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