

# GET

CRAFT  
YOUR  
STORY

BUILD  
THE PERFECT  
PITCH DECK

LAUNCH  
THE VENTURE  
OF YOUR DREAMS

# BACKED

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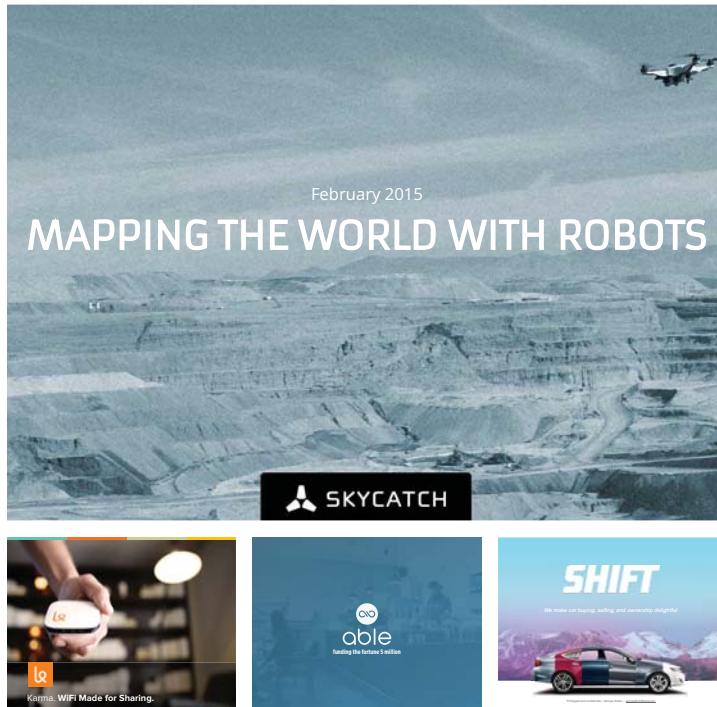
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# Cover

## What should I expect?



## What is it?

The cover slide captures the audience’s attention, sets the tone for the pitch, and serves as “white space” during a presentation so you can express gratitude for your audience’s time, show your passion for your venture, and build trust by mentioning mutual connections.

## What should I demonstrate?

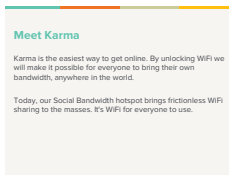
- **Clean logo.** Your logo is the face of your brand; it can be very important to your overall image.
- **Inviting picture.** You might include an engaging picture of your product or customer.
- **Descriptive title.** Put “Investor Briefing” or “Investor Presentation” somewhere on the front cover with the date. Dates help you keep track of different versions.

## What questions do I need to answer?

- Does the cover make you want to open the pitch book?

# Overview

## Who are we?



## What is it?

The company overview is your “elevator pitch”—the fifteen-second version of your deck. It describes a problem you see in the world and how you are going to solve it. Give your audience a small taste of what your company does, but leave them hungry for more.

## What should I demonstrate?

- **Clarity.** It should be extremely easy to understand what the company does.
- **Swagger.** Startups are bold, audacious undertakings. Your summary of the venture should demonstrate you have the energy and the confidence to take on something big.
- **Passion.** If you don't care about you're doing, no one else will.

## What questions do I need to answer?

- What exactly does your company do?
- What industry are you in?
- Is this a novel idea?

# The Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is the simplest, quickest way to describe what your venture is and what makes it so amazing. It's the pitch you prepare for when you only have fifteen seconds to catch someone's attention—like when you meet him in an elevator or see him on a street waiting for an Uber or Lyft ride.

The great screenwriter Blake Snyder argued that the secret to all great pitches is learning to combine the familiar with the intriguing. You must start with something your audience knows well. Then, surprise them with an ironic twist that captures their interest and will make them want to know more.

**Use analogy.** Do not assume your audience knows what you are talking about. Describe your venture with common language and universal images that appeal to your prospective investor and future customers.

**Don't talk about what your product does; talk about what it does for your customer.** This is a really common mistake for engineer types. The classic maxim from Harvard professor Ted Levitt illustrates the idea well: "People buy a ¼" drill bit not because they want a ¼" drill bit, but because they want a ¼" hole."

**Pick a fight.** Don't be afraid to build off of a universally hated experience. Picking a fight can be a clear sign that you're solving a real problem.

**Tell your vision.** Don't get lost in describing the product. Describe the new and better world you want your product to help create.

## Examples

### The first [what you are] that doesn't suck.

- **SilverCar:** The first car rental company that doesn't suck.
- **Karma:** The first mobile provider that doesn't suck.

### The [easiest/fastest/funniest/best] way to [your solution].

- **Shyp:** The easiest way to ship your stuff.

### It's [analogy] for [your space].

- **TreeHouse:** It's Whole Foods for Home Depot.

### We help [your customer] do [your solution] by [your product]. Or, We are a [your product] that helps [your customer] do [your solution].

- **Contactually:** Contactually is a relationship marketing platform that helps professionals keep and generate business from their existing network.

# Team

Who is going to pull this off?

McKay Thomas  
Father Of Two  
Co-founded Baby.com.br  
From Ideation To \$23MM In VC  
Over Product

1st OPINION  
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Team  
Moms Have a Problem  
1st Opinion

**THE TEAM**

Kathleen Shea-Porter  
Operations / Brand  
Editorial Manager  
at LivingSocial

Justin McLeod  
CEO  
Game Theory Major  
Harvard MBA

AJ Bonhomme  
Lead Engineer  
CiviLens, Social  
Agent, Logic Local

+2 engineers, data scientist, growth hacker, community mgr, designer

**SHIFT**

Our founding team has built products that have redefined industries

## What is it?

In the team slide, you want to give the background for each of the key team members, including their current roles, prior experience, significant accomplishments, and education. If there are any major investors or advisers, you can name them here. Keep your bio to less than a minute total when presenting. Your goals are to build rapport, be known, and build confidence that the team can accomplish the mission.

## What should I demonstrate?

- **Brevity.** Each bio should be only seventy-five words or less.\*
- **Domain expertise.** You have the experience and insight to get the job done.
- **Passion, intensity, and a good team culture.** You know the kind of team culture you are creating and that each person is committed to it.

\*You should also prepare a longer (250-500 word) bio, in case an investor asks for it. The point of the pitch deck bio is to get your audience's attention, not tell your life story.

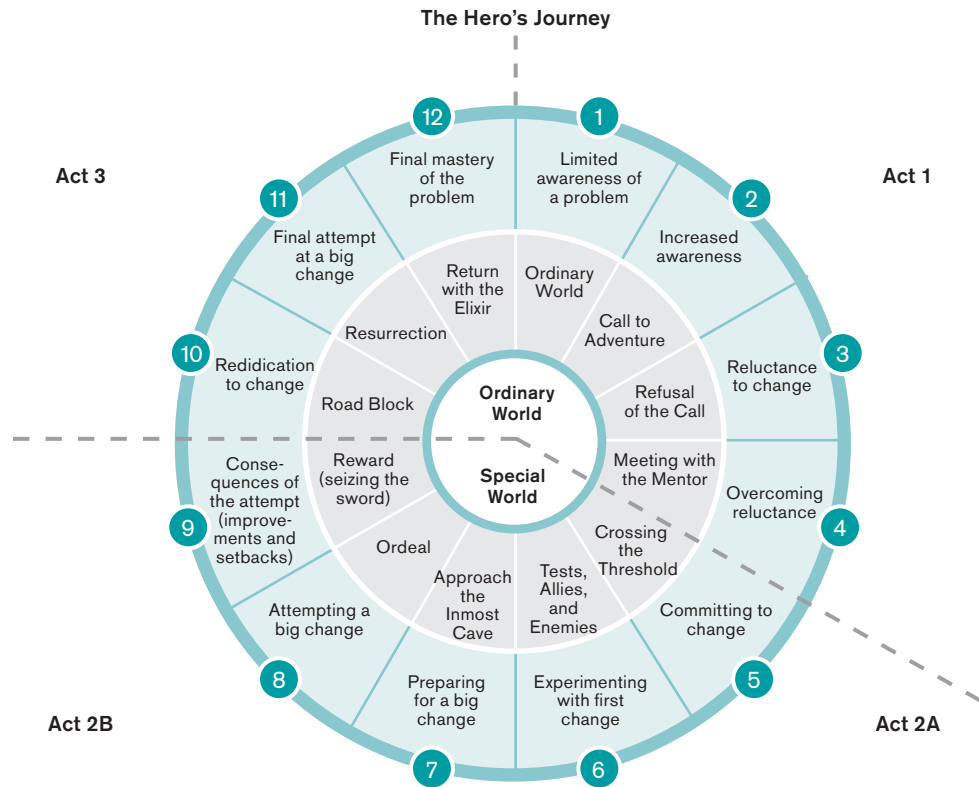
# Your Origin Story

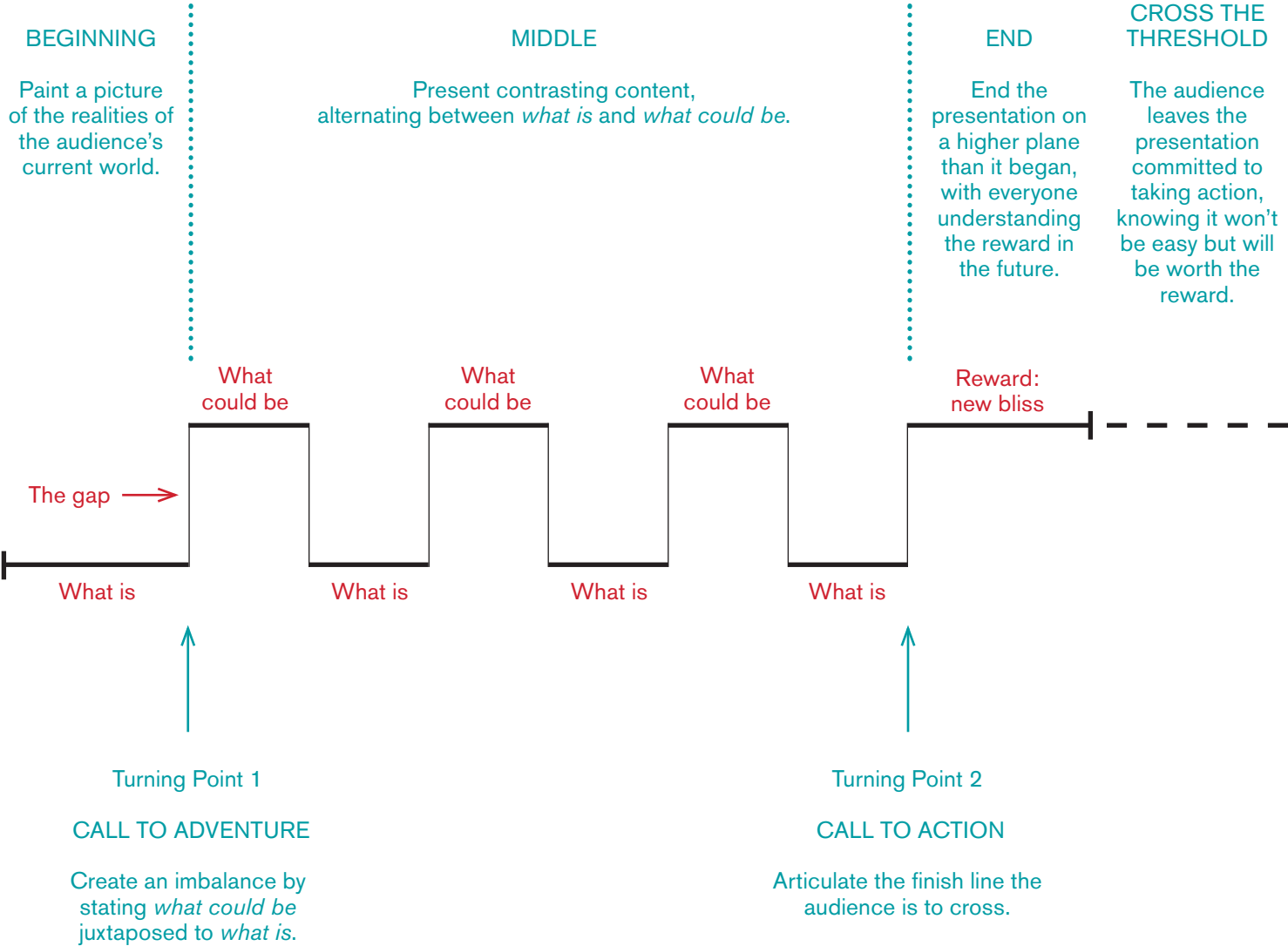
The journey from loving home to the nightclubs of New York to the poorest parts of the world is Scott’s origin story—his personal “why.” It’s how he came to discover his mission and start pursuing it, and it is at the core of his ability to rally people to his cause.

If you want to get people fired up about an idea, they need to know why you are fired up about that idea. Scott knows that sharing the story of how he started keeps people from seeing charity: water as just another charity and creates a bond between him and his audience. “Many people want to know what is driving the entrepreneur forward, and learn more about his or her character before they invest,” Scott said. “I think one of the most important

## Diagram of Joseph Campbell’s Hero’s Journey

Gray circle = inner journey  
Blue circle = outer journey (character transformation)







# Color

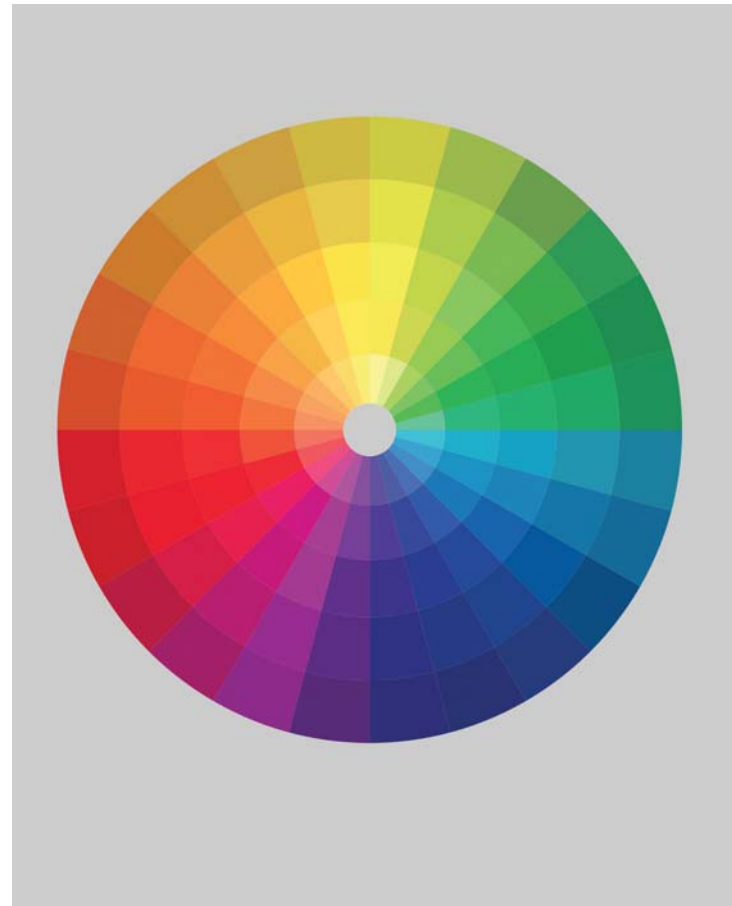
The most basic building block of color is called hue. When we say that these colors are all “red” and these are all “blue,” we are referring to the color’s hue.

As you may remember from elementary school, there are six hues: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet.

But if there are only six, what makes for all the variety in color? Adding white (tint) or black (shade). We get all that wonderful and problematic variation in color from these two simple tools.

When it comes to your color palette, your focus should be on consistency or contrast. Too similar colors will make your design feel disorienting. And don’t trust your eyes; get the RGB numbers. Create a slide at the beginning of your presentation that contains your color palette and stick with it.

The color palette for your deck should contain three core colors, a neutral color, and a highlight color. As you assemble your color palette, ask yourself: In the mind of my audience, which colors are associated with the thoughts, feelings, and ideas I want the audience to have? Of these colors, which relate well with my logo and with each other?



# Crowdfunding

## At a Glance

**How much?** \$5,000–\$100,000

**When?** Seed stage, early stage

Crowdfunding is a very different and potentially disruptive form of startup fundraising that involves many investors pooling small amounts of cash to fund a venture or some aspect of it. Crowdfunding can be divided into two categories:

- **Rewards-based.** People act as “patrons” instead of investors, giving cash in exchange for different levels of rewards. In some cases, those rewards are presales of the product. This is what most people think of when they think of crowdfunding. Examples: Indiegogo, Kickstarter
- **Equity-based.** People make actual investments in exchange for equity in a venture. In the past, equity-based crowdfunding platforms could legally accept only accredited (read: rich) investors. With the new SEC rules that came out through the JOBS Act in March 2015, equity-based crowdfunding now extends to almost anyone. Examples: CircleUp, Crowdfunder

Crowdfunding platforms can do a lot more than just raise capital. Entrepreneurs use them as marketing tools, to validate a prototype or concept, to collect presales, and to test things like pricing and messaging.

## Pros

With rewards-based platforms, you don’t have to give up equity.

Offers you immediate feedback on the viability of your idea; bad ideas don’t get funding.

Creates word-of-mouth advertising.

Creates a built-in customer base of people who liked your business enough to invest in it.

## Cons

Everybody sees it. You may not get enough traction on the site, which looks bad if the funding campaign didn’t pan out

Donors can be impatient and may complain if you don’t deliver rewards on time and as promised.

Competitors see what you are doing, which may incite copycats.

## Notable Crowdfunding Platforms

- Kickstarter
- CircleUp
- Indiegogo
- Crowdfunder

# Anatomy of an AngelList Profile

The image shows a screenshot of an AngelList profile for 'Able Lending'. The profile header includes a clean logo, the company name, a tagline, and location/industry tags. Below the header are tabs for Overview, Activity, and Followers (1699). The main content area is divided into sections: PRODUCT (with a video), FUNDRAISING (with an 'Apply to Invest' button), JOBS (with two job listings), and LATEST (with an 'UPDATE' button). Annotations on the left and right sides provide context for various elements of the profile.

**Clean logo** →

1,669 followers is absurdly high. →

A demo video is best. If you don't have one, use photos of your product. You have the option of adding multiple visuals in a carousel here. →

The tweetable version of your slides and other beautiful words about how amazing your product and company is. →

People will see this when they browse through the list of startups, so keep it short and make it memorable. ←

Search tags help others discover your venture. They are worth adding. ←

This is where investors would see your fundraising info. ←