Please, Don’t Copy Airbnb’s Pitch Deck

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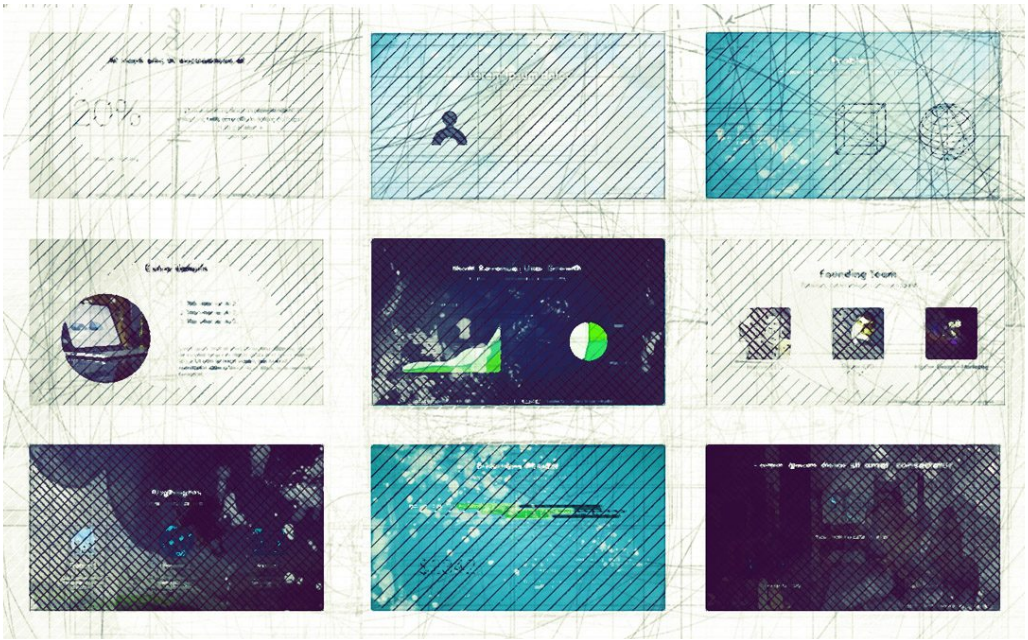

Creating a pitch deck can be overwhelming, so naturally, we turn to the internet to give us some sound advice. We’ve all read articles examining “Pitch Deck Examples from Successful Startups” with Airbnb usually listed at the top. Unfortunately, these articles have lead entrepreneurs to believe there’s a simple formula for building a pitch: **replicating Airbnb’s deck**.

Here are three reasons why you shouldn’t copy Airbnb’s deck:

A. You are not Airbnb.
While you have every right to believe you can raise funds for your venture, as Airbnb did, you most likely have a different storyline, scalable solution, business model, and execution strategy to present to investors. So how does it make sense to jam your unique business plan & investment opportunity into a deck template that worked for Airbnb eight years ago?

B. You want your deck to stand-out.
Active investors receive anywhere from 3-15 pitch decks on a weekly basis. Meaning, they tend to have a short attention span when it comes to reading decks because they’re getting pitched all the time. Imagine that you have a 30-second window to grab their attention before they toss your deck aside and move on to the next investment opportunity. Just like we work so hard to grab the attention of our consumers in today’s saturated market, we must also work hard to grab the attention of potential investors. My question: how will startups ever stand out to investors if everyone is using the same pitch to persuade them?

C. There is context to every example deck so don’t follow the wrong example.
Don’t get me wrong, it is advisable to take inspiration and guidance from successful pitch decks, but make sure the context of the example deck is appropriate for you to use when formulating your pitch. A deck used to present an idea-stage startup will be different from a deck used to present a later-stage startup that is in-revenue. And a deck used to raise a Series A round (like Airbnb’s) will look much different from a deck used to raise a Series D round (like WeWork’s). So, the next time a successful pitch deck is released for our viewing, please make sure it’s pertinent to your companies’ stage and fundraising round.

Unfortunately, there is no easy way to create your investor deck. Crafting an effective pitch that will spark investor interest is difficult and, at times, can feel like a complete distraction from building your business. But if you’re a startup on a mission to raise money for your venture, having a great deck is the gateway to getting those in-person meetings.

So, take the time and spend the energy building a deck that will communicate to investors:

- a) You have an amazing investment opportunity & large market opportunity that will give them a return on their investment . . .
- b) You’ve created a product (or service) that your consumers want, and . . .
- c) Your dedicated team has a realistic execution strategy for scaling.