

As I thought about the process of pitching a business, it struck me that no matter what the stage, the information was essentially the same. A good elevator pitch contains the same content as a good executive summary contains the same content as a good PowerPoint contains the same content as a good business plan. The distinction among these business descriptions is not the substance, it is the degree to which the essential elements are fleshed out. Each document contains slightly more detail than the preceding.

Elevator Pitch --> Executive Summary --> PowerPoint --> Business Plan

This makes good intuitive sense. There is no reason that the things that are most compelling about your business would change based upon the nature of the business description. Nor would an investor be interested in different things by virtue of the form that description takes.

What, then, are the essential elements that make up a good PowerPoint, a persuasive elevator pitch, a compelling executive summary? I have no doubt that VCs will differ somewhat on the precise list, as well as the order and the emphasis. But at its core, I believe that a successful business description should include the following elements:

1. Introduction
2. Team
3. Product
4. Market
5. Business Model
6. Competition
7. Financials
8. Conclusion

If you are pitching a VC, start with these 8 slides. If you are writing an executive summary, start with these 8 headings.

Obviously some businesses will require additional information that is outside the scope of these basics. I am not suggesting for a second that you should always pigeonhole your business into these categories alone. But they are a great starting point from which to build a persuasive description of your business.