

The Seed Deck Checklist.

Fourteen slides. No filler.

An opinionated, slide-by-slide guide to what belongs in a 2026 seed deck — and what gets cut.



Who this is for: founders raising a pre-seed or seed round in 2026.

Who it isn't: Series A+ narratives, growth-stage metric updates, or internal strategy decks.

Reading time: 8 minutes. Action time: however long it takes to cut half your slides.

Most seed decks fail the same way.

They're too long, too hedged, and too decorated. A seed deck isn't a brochure — it's an argument, compressed. Every slide has a job. If a slide doesn't move the argument forward, it belongs in the appendix or the trash.

This checklist is how we build decks at Slatepress. Fourteen slides, each with a single purpose, each opinionated about what belongs and what doesn't. You won't agree with every call. That's fine — **disagreeing with a specific bullet is more useful than following a generic template.**

Use it as a diff against your current deck. For each slide: keep what maps to our "include" list. Cut what shows up on "avoid." If you're under fourteen slides at the end, you're probably closer to investable, not less.

01

Cover

INCLUDE

- Company name, one-line positioning (what you do, for whom)
- Round stage (Seed · 2026)
- Founder name, email, city

AVOID

- Stock hero images, tagline-poetry, "Confidential" watermarks

02

Problem

INCLUDE

- A specific, felt problem — one sentence
- A concrete example of who suffers and how
- Evidence it's not a niche annoyance

AVOID

- "Market is broken" abstractions with no named victim

03

Solution

INCLUDE

- What you built — plain English, not marketing
- One screenshot or diagram that shows the core flow
- Why this shape of solution, not another

AVOID

- Feature matrices, wireframes, "AI-powered" as a category

04

Why now

INCLUDE

- Two or three tangible shifts (regulation, cost curve, behavior)
- Why this company couldn't have worked in 2020

AVOID

- "COVID accelerated digital transformation" clichés

05

Market

INCLUDE

- Bottom-up arithmetic visible on the slide ($N \times \text{price} \times \text{frequency}$)
- TAM / SAM / SOM with named assumptions, not just numbers

AVOID

- A Gartner chart you didn't pay for. "\$XXB market" from a secondary source

06

Product

INCLUDE

- Real screenshots from real UI — not mockups if the product exists
- A narrative sequence: what the user does, step by step

AVOID

- Device frames on desktop apps. Isometric 3D renders. Stock UI kits

07

Traction

INCLUDE

- Hard numbers: revenue, users, retention, pilot contracts
- A chart with honest axes — zero-based, real time range
- What the number does *not* include

AVOID

- Logo walls of companies you had one call with

08

Go-to-market

INCLUDE

- Your first channel, named — not a list of every possible channel
- Your CAC today, or the experiment that will find it
- Who sells (you, AE, self-serve)

AVOID

- "Multi-channel" as a strategy. "Viral" with no mechanism

09

Business model

INCLUDE

- What you charge, per what, to whom
- Unit economics if you have them (even one customer counts)
- Why this pricing shape, not usage or seat

AVOID

- "Freemium + enterprise" as a two-word plan

10

Competition

INCLUDE

- Real competitors named, including incumbents and status quo
- One axis where you're clearly better, one where you're not

AVOID

- 2x2 matrices with you alone in the top-right quadrant

11

Moat

INCLUDE

- Why this gets *harder* to catch, not easier, over time
- Data, network, distribution, or switching cost — pick one and defend it

AVOID

- "Our tech" as moat. Patents at pre-product stage

12

Team

INCLUDE

- Why these founders for this problem — specifically
- Prior shipping credentials, not just logos
- Gaps you know and the hire that fills them

AVOID

- Founder-photo collages without role clarity

13

Financials

INCLUDE

- 12-month burn plan tied to the round
- The two milestones you hit before the next raise
- Runway in months, stated plainly

AVOID

- A 5-year P&L with revenue in year 5 that ends in nine zeros

14

Ask

INCLUDE

- Round size, target instrument (SAFE / priced), close timing
- Use of funds — three buckets, percentages sum to 100
- A clean last line: what you want from the investor reading this

AVOID

- Vague "strategic partners welcome" without naming what that means

WHAT NOW

Run this checklist against your deck. *Cut until it hurts.*

The best seed decks feel under-decorated. Every slide has a single job. Nothing hedges. The math is visible. The team shows up as people who ship, not titles.

If the diff feels painful, that's the point. The slide you love most is usually the slide a partner will skim in four seconds. Your job is to make that four seconds count.

Want someone else to do the cutting?

Slatepress builds seed decks from scratch or rebuilds tired ones. Fixed price, two weeks, no design-by-committee. See work and pricing at slatepress.co.

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