

TEARDOWN 03 · SEED DECK

UberCab, 2008.

The deck every founder cites *and almost none actually reads.*

What we'd change, what we'd keep, and why it matters in 2026.

The deck that launched on-demand. *Read it again. Three slides have aged.*

Garrett Camp and Travis Kalanick's 2008 UberCab deck raised \$200k on a \$4M cap from Rob Hayes at First Round. It's cited more than any seed deck outside of Airbnb's — and yet most founders who reference it have never read past the logo slide. *The deck worked because of what wasn't on it as much as what was.*

By 2026 the playbook has shifted. Partners want 'why now' articulated as a thesis, not implied. Unit economics belong above the fold, not buried in a roadmap. And the cover is a promise, not a logo. **We're redesigning three slides. The ones a 2026 partner reads first.**

Same shape. *Three sharper slides.*

01

COVER

From brand to promise.

The original leads with 'UberCab' in a minimalist logo. The 2026 version puts the product promise above the fold — a reader decides in four seconds whether to keep going.

02

WHY NOW

Make it the spine.

The 2008 deck treated 'why now' as context sprinkled through the intro. A 2026 partner wants a single slide — the three forces converging — as the argument the whole deck hangs on.

03

UNIT ECONOMICS

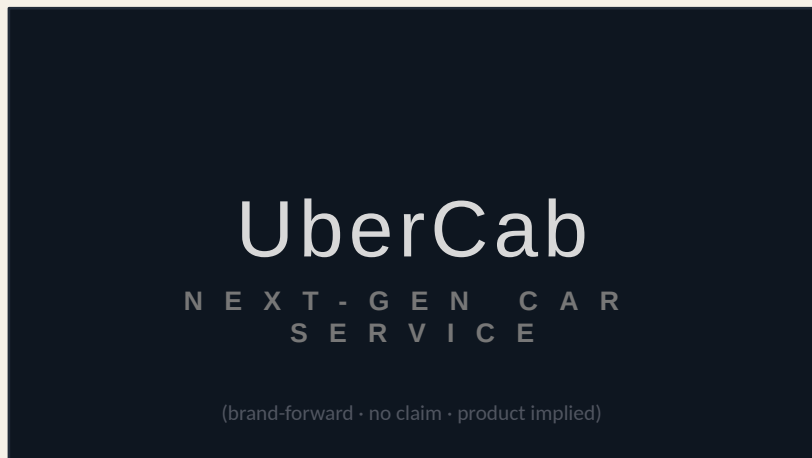
Hero the math.

Uber's driver-utilization arithmetic was radical in 2008 and buried in a roadmap slide. A 2026 partner wants unit economics as a full page they can screenshot.

From brand to promise.

A logo is not a thesis. The cover has to say what the company does.

BEFORE · 2008



AFTER · 2026



A minimalist logo was enough in 2008 because the deck arrived on a desk, not a phone. Today the cover has four seconds to make the promise concrete.

Make 'why now' the spine.

The 2008 deck treated timing as context. In 2026 it's the thesis.

BEFORE · 2008

MARKET OPPORTUNITY

Taxi and black-car market is broken in SF:

- Long wait times, no predictability
- Dispatch is dial-a-cab from 1970s
- Black cars \$70+ minimum, reserved only
- ~17,000 cabs · iPhone launched '07 · GPS APIs free

(why now is the 4th bullet · not a slide)

AFTER · 2026

THREE FORCES · CONVERGING NOW

01

GPS

Google Maps API (2005).
iPhone Maps (2007).
Routing is table stakes.

02

Phone

iPhone 3G ships July '08.
App Store live. Majority-
smartphone in 18 months.

03

Rails

Stripe, Twilio, AWS. Three
people can ship a two-
sided marketplace.

Any earlier, the stack didn't exist. Any later, Lyft beats us to it.

Why now was Uber's real moat — GPS, smartphones, and payment rails arriving together. A 2026 deck names the forces, dates them, and closes with the 'any earlier / any later' line.

Hero the math. One screenshot.

Uber's driver-utilization arithmetic was the slide that funded the company. It should not have been slide seven.

BEFORE · 2008

ROADMAP · PHASE 2

Driver utilization targets:

- Fleet-ops hires · GPS dispatch
- Target 65% driver utilization
- Avg ride \$20 · take rate 20%
- Break-even per car ~ month 4

(unit econ buried in roadmap · no hero math)

AFTER · 2026

PER-DRIVER ECONOMICS · STEADY STATE

$$3 \times \$20 \times 6 \times 20\%$$

rides/hr per ride hrs/day take

$$= \$72 \text{ per driver-day} \cdot \$1.5\text{K/mo}$$

Sources: SF taxi fleet avg · UberCab pilot data · BLS 2008

The math that funded Uber was one equation most partners never saw. The redesign makes it the page they screenshot and send to their partner meeting.

The parts the canon got right. *Steal these.*

Wedge first.

Uber pitched SF black cars. Not 'global on-demand mobility.' The wedge was small, specific, and defensible — everything else was a roadmap slide.

Small ask.

\$200k at a \$4M cap. The round was scoped to a clear milestone — prove the two-sided market in SF — not to a valuation target. The smallness was the signal.

Team as verbs.

The team slide said what each founder had done, not where they'd studied. StumbleUpon exited, Red Swoosh exited. Verbs beat logos on every team slide.

The deck got funded on what wasn't in it.
Now put those pieces on the page.

Uber raised on the strength of three founders and a wedge — but a 2026 partner won't meet you in person on slide one. Put the promise on the cover. Put 'why now' on its own page. Put the unit economics above the fold. The rest of the deck can stay the same.