

The Pitch Mistake Accelerators See in Every Cohort

And it's not what you think.

The mistake is pitching the product instead of the problem.

Every cohort has founders who walk in armed with features, demos, and roadmaps — and walk out confused about why the room didn't light up. They prepared for a product presentation. Accelerators were waiting for a problem argument.

Here's what's really happening: accelerators aren't just evaluating your product. They're evaluating your thinking. Can you clearly articulate what's broken in the world? Do you understand the people experiencing that pain? And does your solution follow logically — even inevitably — from the problem you've described? Most founders skip straight to the answer before the evaluator even understands the question.

*The best pitches don't lead with what you built.
They lead with why the world is broken without it.*

WHY THIS MATTERS

Think about what an accelerator evaluator experiences in a single day: back-to-back pitches, each founder convinced they've built something important. The room becomes numb to enthusiasm very quickly. What cuts through isn't excitement — it's clarity. A founder who can make you feel the

The evaluator's job is to find conviction. Not interest, not potential — conviction. And conviction only comes when the problem is real enough, urgent enough, and painful enough that the solution feels less like a product and more like a relief.

WRONG ORDER VS RIGHT ORDER

Most pitches

- Product first
- Market size slide
- Problem buried late
- Room goes quiet

Winning pitches

- Problem first
- Stakes & urgency
- Solution feels earned
- Room leans in

problem before offering the solution creates a different kind of attention. It's the difference between someone selling you an umbrella and someone making you notice it's raining.

THE FIX

The fix is simple but counterintuitive: spend more time on the world before your company existed than on the company itself.

A useful diagnostic: look at your deck and count the slides dedicated to the problem versus the slides dedicated to your solution. If your problem slide is one line and your solution slide is six bullets, you have it backwards. The problem deserves the real estate. It's where the emotional investment happens.

Ask yourself three questions before you present:

1. Can I describe the problem in a single, memorable sentence that makes someone wince?

2. Have I shown what the world looks like without my solution — not just told them?

3. Does my solution feel like the obvious next sentence after the problem I've described?

**Accelerators fund conviction.
Conviction comes from a problem so clearly articulated
that the solution feels inevitable.**

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