



SCOUT. CONNECT. ELEVATE.

Discovering exceptional startups.
Connecting them to the right opportunities.

STARTUP SCOUT • CONNECTOR • OPPORTUNITY MAKER

**SCOUTING THE FUTURE.
BUILDING TOMORROW.**

- FINDING INNOVATORS**
Identifying high-potential startups and founders.
- BUILDING CONNECTIONS**
Linking startups with investors, mentors, and partners.
- CREATING IMPACT**
Fueling growth and driving long-term success.

**YOUNG. DRIVEN.
FOCUSED ON IMPACT.**

**PASSIONATE ABOUT
PEOPLE, PURPOSE, POSSIBILITIES.**

**HELPING GREAT IDEAS
REACH NEW HEIGHTS.**

Let's connect and build the future together.
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PITCHCORD FOUNDER SCHOOL

FOUNDER SCHOOL HANDBOOK

Prepare. Pitch. Connect. Grow.

A practical preparation guide for founders entering the PitchCord Friday pitch room.



TANAKA GAADZIKWA

LvlUp Startup Scout
Founder discovery • community connection • startup scouting

1. WHAT PITCHCORD IS

The room should understand your company quickly.

PitchCord is a recurring founder pitch community built around a simple path: Join → Submit → Prepare → Pitch Live → Connect.

The goal is not to reward the fanciest deck. The goal is to help scouts, mentors, panel judges and other founders understand the company, the evidence and the next step without guessing.

Friday sessions run from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM on Discord. Founders should complete intake and preparation before entering the live room.

2. THE EIGHT THINGS WE NEED

Bring these into the room.

What we need	What good looks like
Problem	What painful, expensive or important problem exists? Who has it?
Customer	Who specifically uses or buys the product?
Solution	What are you building and why is it better than the current alternative?
Market	How large can this become and why is the market worth pursuing?
Traction	Users, pilots, revenue, LOIs, growth, partnerships, product milestones or other proof.
Business model	How does the company make money? Who pays and how much?
Team	Why is this team capable of solving the problem?
Ask	What do you need next: capital, intros, pilots, mentors, feedback or partners?

3. PITCH BEST PRACTICES

Make it easy for the room to help you.

Be specific: Use real numbers, real users, real milestones and real examples whenever possible.

Be concise: Lead with the important information. Do not spend half the pitch on background.

Show proof: Even early companies can show evidence through customer conversations, product progress, pilots, waitlists or demand.

Know your buyer: Avoid saying everyone is the customer. Say who pays, why they pay and how you reach them.

Make the ask explicit: Funding, pilot, introductions, mentorship, partnership or feedback. Say exactly what moves the company forward.

4. THE 90-SECOND FRAMEWORK

A simple structure for the live room.

Time	Focus	What to say
0:00–0:20	Problem + customer	Who has the problem, and why does it matter?
0:20–0:45	Solution	What are you building, and how does it solve the problem?
0:45–1:05	Proof + market	What evidence says this can work and grow?
1:05–1:20	Team	Why are you the right people to execute?
1:20–1:30	The ask	Tell the room exactly what you need next.

5. PITCH DECK BEST PRACTICES

A useful deck supports the conversation.

1. **Company + one-line value proposition** — Say what you do without making the reader decode it.
2. **Problem** — Make the pain concrete and specific.
3. **Solution / product** — Show how the customer gets value.
4. **Market** — Define the buyer and market realistically.
5. **Traction** — Put the strongest proof up front.
6. **Business model** — Explain who pays, how much, and how revenue scales.
7. **Competition / advantage** — Show why you can win, not why nobody competes.
8. **Team** — Relevant execution capability only.
9. **The ask** — Capital or specific next step, plus how it will be used.

6. COMMON PITCH KILLERS

Avoid these.

- Spending most of the pitch on your personal backstory.
- Saying “everyone is our customer.”
- Using a giant TAM number without explaining who actually pays.
- Claiming traction without giving numbers or evidence.
- Feature dumping instead of explaining customer value.
- Ending without a clear ask.
- Reading the deck word-for-word.
- Using jargon where plain language would be stronger.

7. THE SCOUT LENS

What makes a company easier to evaluate.

A scout needs enough signal to decide whether a company deserves a deeper conversation. That does not mean the company must be perfect. It means the important information should be visible.

Clarity: Can the company be understood in one or two sentences?

Evidence: What proof exists that the problem and demand are real?

Founder-market fit: Why is this team well positioned to execute?

Momentum: What has improved in the last 30–90 days?

Opportunity: Can this become meaningfully larger than it is today?

Coachability: Does the founder listen, answer directly and improve with feedback?

8. FRIDAY PITCH-DAY CHECKLIST

Before you enter the room.

- ☐ Founder intake submitted.
- ☐ 90-second pitch practiced out loud.
- ☐ Deck opens correctly and can be shared quickly.
- ☐ Traction numbers are current.
- ☐ Your ask is one sentence.
- ☐ Discord display name matches your founder/company identity.
- ☐ Camera, mic and internet checked before the session.
- ☐ Be ready for direct questions and concise answers.

PITCH. CONNECT. GROW.

Founder School → Pitch Prep → Founder Intake → Friday Live Room