

Funding Cheat Sheet

Your No-Nonsense Roadmap to Seed & Series A Success

1. Pre-Funding Prep: Stack the Deck in Your Favor

Nail Your Pitch

- Cut the fluff: Define a problem that stings and a solution that sings.
- Show a market so juicy investors can't look away—back it with traction, not dreams.
- Map a business model that's less “hope” and more “here's how we print money.”

Wisdom Nugget: A pitch isn't a TED Talk—it's a sniper shot. Aim for clarity, not applause.

Arm Yourself with Investor-Grade Gear

- One-page teaser: Think billboard, not novel—hook them in 10 seconds.
- Pitch deck: 12-15 slides of pure signal, no noise (problem, solution, traction, team, ask).
- Financials: 12-24 months of projections that don't scream “I made this up last night.”

Flex Your Metrics Muscle

- Revenue, active users, retention, CAC, LTV—know your numbers cold.
- Early customers singing your praises? Bottle that validation.
- Product-market fit isn't a vibe—it's data proving people need you.

Wisdom Nugget: Investors don't fund potential; they fund evidence. Traction trumps tearsheets.

Hunt the Right Money

- Angels for speed, VCs for scale, strategics for edge—know who's who.
 - Stalk funds that live in your sector and stage (check Crunchbase, not vibes).
 - Warm intros beat cold emails—work your network or crash an accelerator.
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2. Seed Round: Plant Roots That Last

Set the Money & Value Game Plan

- Target 12-18 months of runway—enough to sprint, not stumble.
- SAFE or convertible note for speed; priced round if you've got swagger.
- Valuation isn't ego—it's math. Don't oversell and underdeliver.

Wisdom Nugget: Under-raise and you're toast; over-raise and you're diluted. Find the sweet spot.

Pitch Like a Pro

- Warm intros > LinkedIn spam > conference ambushes.
- Keep it tight: 15-minute pitches that land like a jab-cross-hook combo.
- Momentum is your currency—show growth curves, not flatlines.

Be Diligence-Proof

- Legal house in order: Clean cap table, IP locked down, no skeletons.
- Financials that don't make accountants cry—projections tied to reality.
- Team slide isn't a bio dump—it's proof you've got the horses to win.

Close Without Chaos

- Term sheet: Decode valuation, dilution, and rights like it's a treasure map.
 - Lawyers aren't optional—pay for peace of mind.
 - Money in the bank isn't real until it clears—chase those wires.
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3. Series A: Prove You're Not a One-Hit Wonder

Hit Growth Milestones That Scream "Scale Me"

- \$1M+ ARR or user growth that makes jaws drop—pick your flex.
- Business model isn't "we'll figure it out"—it's repeatable and ruthless.
- Unit economics that sing: Low CAC, high LTV, margins that fatten.

Wisdom Nugget: Seed buys you a shot; Series A buys you a stage. Perform or perish.

Target the Big Guns

- Institutional VCs and growth funds—think Sequoia, not Uncle Bob.
- Chase firms that don't just cut checks but crack scaling codes.
- High-conviction intros only—lukewarm leads waste everyone's time.

Sell a Vision, Not Just a Startup

- Paint a market takeover plan that's ambitious but not delusional.
- Moat matters—show why competitors will choke on your dust.
- Capital roadmap: Where every dollar goes and what it buys.

Survive the Diligence Gauntlet

- Audits dig deep—your books better be squeaky.
- Founders get grilled—own your story, flaws and all.
- Legal close isn't a formality—it's a finish line. Plan deployment day one.

4. Pro Tips to Outsmart the Game

Play the Long Game – Court investors before your bank account begs. Relationships now = checks later.

Weaponize Data – Metrics aren't garnish; they're the meal. Feed investors a growth feast.

Embrace the Grind – “No” is a detour, not a dead end. Pivot, polish, persist.

Negotiate Like a Shark – High valuation feels good until you lose the value-add partner. Pick wisely.

Final Nugget: Fundraising isn't a lottery—it's chess. Move with purpose, not panic.

Case Study: From Scrappy Seed to Solid Series A

- **Startup:** RevFlow (AI-powered invoicing for SMBs)
- **Sector:** B2B SaaS
- **Funding Journey:** Bootstrapped → \$750K Seed (SAFE) → \$6M Series A

Seed Round: The Scrappy Hustle

- **Traction:** \$15K MRR, 300+ SMB users, 20% MoM growth
- **Investor Hook:** Clear pain point (manual invoicing chaos), strong word-of-mouth adoption
- **Tactics That Worked:**
 - Leveraged warm intros from accelerator network
 - Pitched aggressively at fintech and SaaS-focused angel events
 - Used early customer testimonials as traction proof

Key Lesson: They didn't have \$1M ARR, but they **proved demand with hard adoption data**—that's what closed the Seed round.

Series A: Proving Repeatability

- **Traction:** \$150K MRR, 10K+ SMBs, CAC payback <6 months
- **Investor Hook:** Demonstrated clear **product-market fit** + scalable sales model
- **Tactics That Worked:**
 - Focused on a **repeatable** inbound and outbound sales engine
 - Cleaned up financials early (to avoid investor red flags)
 - Secured a lead investor before opening the round (created FOMO)

Key Lesson: Series A investors don't gamble on "potential"—they back **proven, repeatable growth engines**.