Is your one-pager scaring away investors?

Finance, Investment

An investor one pager is that very short document that sums up your startup. Its main purpose is to grab the investor's attention, help you stand out and get you that meeting.

The problem is that an investor spends around five minutes reading a one pager. Well actually, this is only if she or he hasn't tossed it aside before reading through it due to one of the common errors entrepreneurs often make.

After talking with many investors and deal flow managers, we've gathered a list of mistakes you should avoid making. Gal Ringel, senior investment associate at Nautilus, powered by AOL, highlighted a few major issues that would impact how an investor sees your one pager, he says " If your one pager has too many buzzwords, is longer than one page, or is in word format, or if it lacks important information such as team, fundraising status or even what is your solution, you might lose my interest. You don't have to give me all of the information here, you need to interest me enough to get the meeting."

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Here are the top seven tips to create a great one pager:

1. Clarity, clarity, clarity.

Investors read hundreds of one pagers a year, so they won't put much effort into guessing what you're trying to say. In addition, being clear shows that you actually understand what you are writing about. Be as clear and concise as possible.

2. Grammar and spelling.

Some people have an adverse reaction to spelling and grammar mistakes; they cannot stand going through an unreadable one pager. Even the best product cannot overcome this hurdle. It's crucial to have someone serious proofread your content. Ask someone you know or find someone to help you (e. g., use fiverr). Good grammar won't get you points, but bad grammar looks unprofessional and will get you in the recycle bin immediately.

3. Good looks.

Your one pager doesn't have to be gorgeous, but it should be easy on the eyes. Create a nice design that will attract investors. It should make a good first impression and look professional. Again, if design isn't your strong suit, get comments from a designer and let him or her improve your one pager's appearance. This also shows investors that you make an effort in all aspects of your venture.

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4. Is it too long?

Your one pager cannot be more than one page long (sounds obvious, but you would be surprised how many entrepreneurs write a two page one pager), and it shouldn't be overcrowded with words. Put yourself in the investor's shoes: Would you read a crammed one pager, when you have other things you could be doing with your time?

5. The perfect team.

Investors invest in people, therefore, they must know who the team is and how they can perform the tasks ahead. Demonstrate how the team members complement each other. If you are missing team members, mention that you are searching for them.

6. Did you do your homework?

Who is your competition? Search. Ask people. There is no such thing as no competition. If they aren't out there yet, who could they be later on? Why are you more likely to succeed? Why are you better? Highlight your differences and how you will bring more value. What is your exit strategy? Find past acquisitions that are similar to the scenario of your company being acquired. Show investors you are thinking of these issues, which are crucial to landing that investment.

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7. Be honest.

If investors want to invest, they will check every detail and they will eventually find out if you have not been honest. It's better to be honest from the start to avoid scenarios that will damage your personal brand or will cause you to lose out on investment opportunities later on. If you feel like you need to hide something, this is exactly the problematic area you should be working on in your startup. Take action and improve in these areas - investors will notice. As James Altucher said: " Honesty is the fastest way to prevent a mistake from turning into afailure".

Follow our points above to increase the chances that your one pager will get you the meeting. Building a startup is hard. Don't let this document be the thing that fails you.