



## #MITEF: Clear, Concise and Convincing

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Bruce Bachenheimer and his Pace University MBA class  
(Photo: L. Keyson)

By Lauren Keyson

The pitch event at [MIT Enterprise Forum of NYC](#) last night showcased five disruptive early-stage technology companies at **Chadbourne & Parke** in 30 Rock. Companies demoed unique cutting edge technology platforms — with no retread Daily Deals or Facebook versions in sight. **Lori Hoberman**, MITEF board member and moderator, gave speakers five minutes to present and didn't have to cut anyone off. Each was concise, clear and convincing.

**Bruce Bachenheimer**, Pace University director of entrepreneurship and board member, attended with his graduate business development class. He wanted them to see what he called “actual” companies presenting their business plans. “When you do it in the classroom, there is an academic part of doing research and looking at databases,” he said. “I hope they see what a “real” presenter would look like – someone who has done a lot of pitching, probably has received a seed round or doing an A round now, have polished their pitch and have actual technology.”

**Geoff Schneider**, Cava Capital, was on the panel. He was looking for innovative companies doing disruptive things, specifically in the area of data-driven marketing solutions. “We view the world a little bit differently – we don't view the world in terms of verticals, we say there are inputs in data, adtech, media, mobile, ecommerce and social. I'm looking how we can build the next billion dollar companies in the marketing solutions space.”

VC **Jeffrey Parkinson**, KEC Holdings, also sat on the panel. His firm is attracted to companies with unique market niches. “The high level is we are looking for companies that we think can really transform that industry that they are playing in. From there we find a company with a great team, vision and the ability to execute.” He sees a lot of cyber security internationally and locally a lot of ecommerce. His advice to startups: “Be confident, know what you know and don't be afraid to say what you don't know. The worst thing anyone can do when making a pitch is to answer a question with a dishonest or not-knowing response. It's far better to say, ‘I don't know' and look forward.”

Presenter **Parul Singh**, co-founder and CEO of [Gradeable](#) took on the education sector. Her mobile app is intended take grading digital and give faster, smarter feedback to students. But she realizes that getting a school to allocated money is difficult. “I think the biggest thing is to make sure that there is an actual user and market need that you are addressing, because there are a lot of ‘nice-to-haves,’” she said. “But I think that the way this market works, unless it's something really useful, I don't think people will pay for it, and I don't know if it's going to stick.”

Other notable companies that pitched last night included [Audicus](#), an ecommerce company that makes quality hearing aids up to 70% more affordable by removing the middleman with its direct to consumer model. Also, there was [Delightfully](#) which allows consumers to create the perfect “unwrapping moment;” [LessonFace](#), music lessons online; and [Carebooker](#), a service that books care for family, pets, baby-sitting, lessons, and cleaning. The Carebooker team was enthusiastic but small – two of their team members were dogs.