



Pitch Night Competition Handbook

For Startups and Small Businesses

Produced By



OVERVIEW

Pitch Night is an elevator pitch competition. An elevator pitch is a concise, compelling introduction that can be communicated in the amount of time it takes to ride an elevator. This competition presents residents of Douglas County, Oregon with a great opportunity to pitch their business idea to a panel of judges.

A well-planned elevator pitch can open the doors to success in your future entrepreneurial endeavors and give you a chance to win pre-seed funds to kick-start your business at our **Pitch Nights for Startups** or much more at our **Pitch Night for Small Businesses**.

Each participant will be given five minutes total to describe their business idea including how the funds will be used, followed by a five-minute Q&A period from our panel of judges.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants must be a resident of Douglas County, Oregon.
- The business must be headquartered within Douglas County, Oregon.
- For the Startup Pitch Night, the pitch cannot be for a business currently in operation that has produced more than \$5,000 in revenue.
- For the Small Business Pitch Night, the pitch cannot be for a business currently under \$5,000 in revenue.
- Startups and Businesses must be for-profit and be able to show that they have a sustainable future.
- Applicants must be ready and available to pitch their business idea at Pitch Night competitions.
- Applicants must be able to explain how they will use the prize funds.

FORMAT

- Pitch Night is comprised of an at-large submission process and a Final Round in which participants pitch live.
- At-Large Submissions: Any eligible person or business is able to submit an application online.
- Live Finals Round: The top finalists selected will pitch live during a GrowthTalks event.
- The top scoring pitch as determined by a panel of judges will be the winner(s) and or audience vote.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- The person submitting the application should be the owner of the business/business idea and should be the same person who will be pitching live during the competition.
- The Partnership will provide free coaching opportunities for applicants that are designed to help with applicants' presentations.

- For Small Business Pitch Night, make sure you come prepared to answer questions similar to the following:
 - What is your primary business focus?
 - How will this funding help you in expanding your current business?
 - Describe how the proposed expansion will impact your staffing levels or model, if at all.
- For Startup Pitch Night, make sure you come prepared to answer questions similar to the following:
 - Describe your Startup idea.
 - What steps have you already taken toward establishing your business?
 - Describe what you would do with any money you win.
- Applications will be considered for 6 (six) months. Candidates will need to resubmit their applications for competitions after if it has been more than six months since their last application.

PITCH GUIDELINES

- The purpose of a pitch is to quickly get the judges' attention, let them know what your product or service is, and what you need the fund for.
- Distributing material, samples and/or prototypes to judges prior to or during your pitch is permitted and encouraged.
- The presenter will be allowed a strict five minutes to pitch followed by five minutes of questions from a panel of judges. There will be a time clock and remaining time warnings.

JUDGES & SCORING

- Individual submissions will be prescreened, and applicants will be notified if they advanced to pitch live. Note: A minimum of six qualified applications must be submitted in order to have a competition.
- A panel of 3 or more judges will include entrepreneurs, consultants, investors, and or other business professionals.
- Judges will use a scoring sheet and criteria provided by Umpqua Economic Development Partnership that will be tallied to determine the highest-ranking pitch. Individual scores will not be given to Applicants.

SCHEDULE & AWARDS

- Participants will be organized in a randomly selected order and will be required to present at their designated time.
- The winner will be announced at the conclusion of the Pitch Night event.
- No cash will exchange hands at the event. Umpqua Economic Development Partnership will work with the winner to provide the award funds or services. This payment is determined as part of the presentation and/or follow up Q&A discussion with the judges.

OTHER NOTES

- This document is intended as a handbook and set of guidelines for participants as they prepare to apply and participate in the Pitch Night events. The information given here is subject to change. If you have any questions, feel free to contact officemanager@uedpartnership.org.
- Pitch Night presentations maybe be recorded (photography and videography) for future promotional use of the organization. By applying, you agree for your image, likeness, and name to be used in any publications or purposes of Umpqua Economic Development Partnership.

Pitch Night was created in 2019 when Umpqua Economic Development Partnership took over GrowthTalks (formerly Umpqua Pub Talks and Y.E.S). The Partnership values entrepreneurial development in Douglas County because it is an important avenue for economic vitality in our community. We help by getting Startups motivated while competing for pre-seed funds and give Small Businesses a much-needed boost with our larger prized competition. The Partnership hopes to inspire people to think outside of the box and provide a resource to those who aren't sure what the next step is in their business endeavors.

The end goal is to encourage an entrepreneurial culture in Douglas County. Thank you to the Partnership Board of Directors and its contributors for starting the pre-seed fund. Since starting the fund other amazing organizations have contributed. Thank you to our Partners and Sponsors without who we could not have these events.

PARTNERSHIP

If you would like to contribute to the raffle prizes and prize funds and/or partner with GrowthTalks in supporting our areas entrepreneurs, please contact Executive Director [Brian Prawitz](#) for more information on our sponsorship packages.