



Pitch Event Partner
Event Planning Guide

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DIAMOND CHALLENGE ROUNDS

- **Submission Round** – Participants submit a written concept narrative and pitch deck online via the competition platform found on diamondchallenge.awardsplatform.com.
- **Pitching Round** – Participants pitch (**Virtual competitors:** Submit a pre-recorded pitch video and pitch deck in the competition platform. Judges score and provide feedback in a separate judging round. **Live competitors:** Pitch live in-person, virtually or via a hybrid model and submit a pitch deck to the pitch event partner prior to the pitch event date.)
- **Semifinal Round** – Semifinalists upload a pre-recorded pitch video and pitch deck online via the competition platform found on diamondchallenge.awardsplatform.com. Team members will answer judge questions separately and live within our conference platform on **April 12 or April 13** during a designated time slot.
- **Diamond Challenge Summit** – April 11 - April 16 online via the Diamond Challenge conference platform (to be determined).

After the semifinal round, hosted during the Diamond Challenge Summit, three teams from each track will be selected as Diamond Challenge finalists. Additional prize opportunities are available to semifinalists throughout the Summit.

PITCH EVENT CHECKLIST

- ___ Review the Diamond Challenge [pitch event partner](#) toolkit
- ___ Attend monthly pitch event partner webinars
- ___ Identify your pitch event date
- ___ Reserve your pitch event venue (**The venue must accommodate at least 10 teams**)
- ___ Recruit at least three pitch event judges for every 10 teams you invite
- ___ Finalize the event schedule and staffing plan
- ___ Email participants with event details, submission deadlines, and submission FAQs
- ___ Receive and save participant pitch decks
- ___ Randomly assign, order and load pitch decks
- ___ Conduct event set-up
- ___ Host the event and disperse each \$250 prize to semifinalist teams
- ___ Post engaging event content on social media platforms throughout the day and tag the Diamond Challenge (@diamondchalleng) in all posts
- ___ Submit the Diamond Challenge pitch event partner end of year report
- ___ Save, scan and email all attendee photo release forms to info@diamondchallenge.org

COMMUNICATIONS AND PITCH DECKS

It is the responsibility of the pitch event partner to determine what information to convey to participants regarding event timing and logistics. At minimum, communications should include the following:

- RSVP form (if applicable)
- an event schedule (registration and start times for the competition)
- venue name, location, and parking (if applicable)
- travel information (best address for GPS – participants are expected to arrange their own transportation to pitch events) (if applicable)
- food accommodations (dietary restrictions should be tracked, if applicable)
- instructions on how to submit final pitch decks (pitch decks should be preloaded prior to participants' arrival at the event)

Teams must be allowed to update pitch deck presentations prior to the pitch event, with a recommended submission window of **72 hours prior to the pitch event**. It is recommended that pitch decks are loaded at least **48 hours prior to the pitch event**. Participants are not allowed to view other teams' pitch decks prior to the event.

Recommendations for where to collect final pitch decks include:

- Dropbox
- via email
- via google drive
- via an alternative platform

FUNDRAISING, FUND USAGE AND FEES

Each partner is free to use a pitch event as an opportunity for fundraising. However, please limit the scope of fundraising to the specific pitch event. Partners can determine if they choose to charge event fees to attendees, excluding Diamond Challenge participants. **Participants must attend for free**. We request that any questions about the suitability of a fundraising appeal be discussed with UD HORN prior to its execution.

If your organization has available funds, they can be used toward items such as judge gifts and additional student prizes. Please note: **\$250.00 (two hundred fifty United States dollars)** of the wire-transferred partner stipend must be given to each winning semifinalist team from your pitch event location. Please review our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed via DocuSign to see how many semifinalist teams you will choose from the business innovation, social innovation or both tracks. Your organization will choose how to best deliver the funds to students in the form of a check, gift cards, etc.

It is recommended that pitch event partners provide breakfast, lunch, or heavy snacks to pitch event attendees if the event is hosted in-person. It is voluntary if you make refreshments complimentary or for purchase. In addition, it is recommended that water is available in each pitch room.

If the event is hosted in-person, at minimum, slightly nicer refreshment accommodations must be available for all judges for free throughout the pitch event. Examples include:

- continental breakfast

- juice
- coffee
- water
- snacks

ATTENDANCE AND SPEAKER GUIDELINES

Each pitch event partner is free to determine who may attend the event. However, we would encourage that the event is open to any students, parents, or community members who may wish to attend.

We strongly recommend that you recruit a panel of judges with diverse backgrounds and expertise. **One speaker or panel is required at the event.**

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

The following event schedule is recommended. The schedule is designed for a morning start time. Partners hosting more than one track can have pitches occurring simultaneously in different rooms or host one track in the morning and another in the afternoon. Deviations can be discussed with a Horn Entrepreneurship representative to ensure consistency is maintained.

Recommended start time: No earlier than 9:00 a.m. United States Eastern Time

Recommended registration time slot: Allow at least 45 minutes to conduct registration

Recommended pitch event length: No more than four hours in length for an in-person event, and no more than two-to-three hours in length for a virtual event

Time Allocation	Activity
30 - 45 minutes	Check-in and networking (optional for virtual events)
5 minutes	Welcome (potential slot for a guest speaker)
10 minutes	Group meeting to review rules, judging, and the event schedule
5 minutes	Judge introductions
100 minutes (10 minutes per team)	Team pitches (if running two tracks, run pre-planned breakout rooms)
30 minutes	Judges deliberate and determine winners (in breakout room 1); participants eat/drink (during in-person events only) and listen to a guest speaker/panel (in breakout room 2) (provide time for Q&A)
5 minutes	Winners are announced

15 minutes	Individual team photos, large group photo, & networking (Zoom screenshots are recommended for virtual events)
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EVENT STAFFING

Assigning personnel for each of the following roles is recommended. If it is not possible to assign unique individuals to each role, then one person should fulfill multiple roles. For example, registration staff members could also serve as timekeepers/pitch emcees.

Overall Coordinator (1)	responsible for monitoring the execution of the event plan and ensuring that staff roles are performed
Registration Coordinator (2) (not required for a virtual event)	check-in pitch event attendees and communicate event details
Event Emcee (1)	responsible for leading sessions in an exciting manner and involving all participants
Event Speaker (1)	responsible for delivering a pitch about the pitch event partner organization to attendees on behalf of the host and its programs
Guest Speaker (2)	inspire participants to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations
Event Photographer (1)	responsible for capturing images of all event activities and participants; for best use, photo quality must be 1920 X 1080. For a virtual event, take screenshots of the Zoom feed.

Judging Coordinator (1)	responsible for enforcement and interpretation of competition rules and judge briefing prior to presentations; the coordinator should also be responsible for collecting judges' evaluations and tabulating results; a data entry assistant (1) may be utilized, if possible/desired
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Technical Support (1)	responsible for ensuring the proper function of laptops, projectors, clickers, etc. for pitches
Timekeeper/Pitch Emcee (1 per presentation room)	responsible for running the room(s) used for pitches; this includes introducing each team, keeping time, helping with transitions between pitches, and ensuring that the judges are ready prior to the start of each pitch
Floater (1+)	responsible for assisting the overall coordinator, meeting the needs of attendees, and helping other staff to perform their roles, as needed
Media Liaison (1)	an individual highly informed regarding the Diamond Challenge, responsible for providing event media quotes and engaging with event media contacts

PROPOSED TALKING POINTS

1. About the Diamond Challenge and Horn Entrepreneurship
 - a. Horn Entrepreneurship serves as the creative engine for entrepreneurship education and advancement at the University of Delaware. Built and actively supported by successful entrepreneurs, Horn Entrepreneurship empowers aspiring innovators as they pursue new ideas for a better world. Horn Entrepreneurship powers the Diamond Challenge, the cornerstone for youth entrepreneurship activity globally. Created in 2012 to support the next generation of high school entrepreneurs, the Diamond Challenge has helped over 15,000 students bring their entrepreneurial ideas to life.
2. About the pitch event partner organization
3. Thank you message to:
 - a. Attendees
 - b. Sponsors
 - c. Judges
 - d. Educators
 - e. Volunteers
 - f. Etc.
4. Overview of day's schedule in order of events/activities
5. Review competition [rules](#)
6. "Housekeeping"- information about restrooms, water, food, parking, etc. (if applicable)

PRESENTATION ETIQUETTE AND PITCH STYLE IDEAS

1. Participants should be encouraged, but not required, to observe the other teams while they are presenting. Although teams that present early may be concerned that later teams have an advantage, the presentation order is randomly selected by the pitch event partner and the learning benefits from watching other teams far outweigh any concerns about a possible competitive advantage.
2. Once a presentation begins, all efforts should be made to minimize distractions, including the silencing of cell phones and explicitly requesting that attendees do not utilize cell phones or enter/exit the room during any presentations.
3. In the event of a potential tie, a pitch-off may be warranted. Pitch-offs allow the tied teams to pitch once more in front of all judges and pitch event attendees before a final decision is made.
4. In order to provide the maximum amount of exposure for each team, round-robin style pitching fairs may be beneficial. Teams or judges are stationed in one location for the duration of the pitch event, and either participants or judges rotate at least three times. All of the scores are then tabulated, with the intention of creating a more holistic and well-rounded judging process. This type of activity can be achieved by creating multiple [breakout rooms on Zoom](#).

RULES

1. Prior to the start of each presentation, the emcee should ensure that both the judges and the presenters are ready. He/she should then remind the audience to please remain silent and seated (if applicable) for the duration of the pitch; remind the team that they have **five minutes** to present and that the limit will be strictly enforced; then, invite the team to begin.
2. Time begins when the first team member begins to speak. Whenever possible, a running countdown of remaining time should be made visible to the presenters.
3. When the time limit is reached, the emcee should allow the presenter to finish his/her current sentence only.
4. Thereafter, he/she should remind the judges that they have **three minutes** to ask questions about the presentation and invite the judges to ask their first question. Judges may require a few moments to jot down thoughts at this point. The emcee should watch to see when they appear ready to move on to questions, encouraging them to keep with time. Time begins when the first word is uttered by the judges. Whenever possible, a running countdown of time should be made visible to the judges and presenters. If a presentation ends early, the Q&A session should still remain three minutes in length.

5. At the conclusion of each Q&A session, judges should be invited to complete their evaluation forms while the emcee announces the next presenting team and provides any assistance.
6. During the transition between teams, the emcee is encouraged to actively communicate with the audience (examples include: playing music, asking questions, sharing fun facts, etc. to further fuel the audience's engagement)

MEDIA RELEASE FORMS

Per University of Delaware policy, the Diamond Challenge is required to request and receive valid waivers from all photographed event attendees in order to utilize pitch event photos for promotional purposes. Please ensure every photographed pitch event attendee completes the appropriate photo release form. All forms must be compiled, saved, scanned and emailed to info@diamondchallenge.org by the end of March.

- [Minor release form](#)
- [Adult release form](#)

RECOGNITION

All pitch event partners are welcome to recognize participants by providing printed certificates toward the conclusion of the event. Templates are accessible in the pitch event partner toolkit.

JUDGE SCORES AND FEEDBACK

Students receive a clean slate for the pitching round. Therefore, no submission round scores will be used when tabulating pitching round scores.

Some recommended judging activities include:

- host a judge networking event before/after the pitch event (the networking session can be for judges only, or for both judges and participants)
- judge feedback sessions in person, where judges share verbal feedback (no scores) for five minutes per team
- host a general judge feedback session at the end of the pitch event where judges highlight areas that all participants can broadly work on for the future

Disclaimers:

- **Students should not receive their scores**
- Offer students LinkedIn accounts for judges (once judge approval is granted) so students can develop relationships post-event

VIRTUAL EVENT RECOMMENDATIONS

University of Delaware utilizes Zoom Video Conferencing. This video conferencing platform is recommended so our team can provide the best support and guidance.

ZOOM CONSULTATION

For extra support, if you would like to schedule an additional Zoom consultation with our Diamond Challenge Program Coordinator, email info@diamondchallenge.org.

PURCHASING ZOOM SOFTWARE

- Purchase [Zoom Pro](#). Zoom Pro is best because you will not have any time limitations. You can join a [monthly or annual plan](#). Monthly is recommended if you are solely intending to use Zoom for this one pitch event. If you will use Zoom for other organizational activities, a yearly plan will be more cost-effective.

REGISTRATION SET-UP

- Require [registration](#) for your event
- Create a [waiting room](#) so the host running the meeting can admit all approved individuals into the Zoom room
- Create a meeting [passcode](#) to increase the security of your event

COMMUNICATIONS

- Inform registrants that they cannot share any meeting details with anyone to maximize security.

ATTENDEE CONTROLS

- View the full list of ways you can control your Zoom meeting room and view your in-meeting settings [here](#).
- [Zoom roles](#)
- To guarantee a seamless event, it is strongly encouraged that the host(s) of your meeting control participant access to audio and video, and that attendees do not have control over their audio or video.
- Only members of your organization with identical email hosts can receive co-host privileges.
- It is recommended that you have at least one other co-host assigned in the event that Internet connectivity issues take place.

HIGHLIGHTING SPEAKERS ON SCREEN

- You can pin or spotlight a specific speaker on screen by following [these instructions](#).

BREAKOUT ROOMS

If you are hosting two tracks, it is strongly recommended that you host two breakout rooms simultaneously, allowing both tracks to pitch at the same time. You can [control](#) which participants and judges can unmute themselves. [Pre-assigning breakout rooms](#) is recommended because it will save you time and potential stress during the event.

While the judges are deliberating winners, you will want to have two breakout rooms running at once. The judges will be in one room with at least one facilitator, and the attendees will be in another room with a speaker/panel.