

Workshop Zoom Logistics – Small Group Discussion

Each Small Group Discussion will be 30 MINUTES.

- Use the the templates provided to present your work.
- Each team will be given 2 minutes to present.
- EIR feedback/comments will be after all the presentations.

**NOW, ON TO THE DAY'S
BLITZ WORKSHOP!**

Innovation + Entrepreneurship

the discipline of finding and solving problems in new ways under conditions of uncertainty

and creating a viable way to deliver a solution's value to the world

Solutions may include but are not solely a science, technology, service, product, or process

It's NOT EASY



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SHAPING YOUR IDEA

Idea to Reality

Today we work on SHAPING YOUR IDEA!

- Topic #1: Problem Statement & Stakeholders
- Topic #2: Competition
- Topic #3: Value Proposition
- What's Next

- (a) Introduce Topics
- (b) Work on your ideas
- (c) Share results and get feedback in small groups - prepare a slide or two to share

Expectations

- Come with an open mind
- Challenge yourself
- Stretch your thinking
- Move quickly through the topics
- It's OK to not have all the answers right now
- Remember – we want you to succeed

Goal is to understand where you need to
do more work

Topic #1: Defining Your Problem and Who Cares About It?

Nail the Problem You're Solving

Problems – Finding and Framing



People STRUGGLING to do
something – aka a “job to be” done



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“Jobs-to-be-Done” ...

- A job (or problem to solve) is **concrete**, not abstract
- **Ongoing** and recur in the daily flow of life
- Jobs/Problems come in **many forms**
 - Simple or Complex
 - Predictable or Unpredictable
 - Regular or Occasional
 - Need, Want, Problem to be Solved
- **Cannot create** jobs/problems, only **discover** them

EXAMPLE PROBLEM STATEMENT

I believe small businesses (*who*)
experience difficulty in finding good, qualified candidates
(*job to done*) in a timely manner (*struggle*)
when trying to recruit/search for talent online
because they don't know where to begin looking
(*struggle*)

Jobs & their Stakeholders

We need to be able to answer and articulate...with evidence:

- Who does it affect -- aka who CARES about solving the problem?
- Why is it significant ... to them? What is the consequence of this problem not being solved?
- How are they dealing with it now?

Is this a problem **WORTH** solving?

Types of Stakeholders

- **End Users** – touch the product, push the buttons, make it work
- **Decision Makers** – make the ultimate purchase and have the money to do so
- **Influencers** – people whose opinions matter, their support (or lack thereof) can influence your success

WORKSHOP: Part 1

YOUR PROBLEM STATEMENT

Think about the “job to be done”, who is trying to accomplish that “job” and what is the resulting “problem” they currently face in accomplishing it

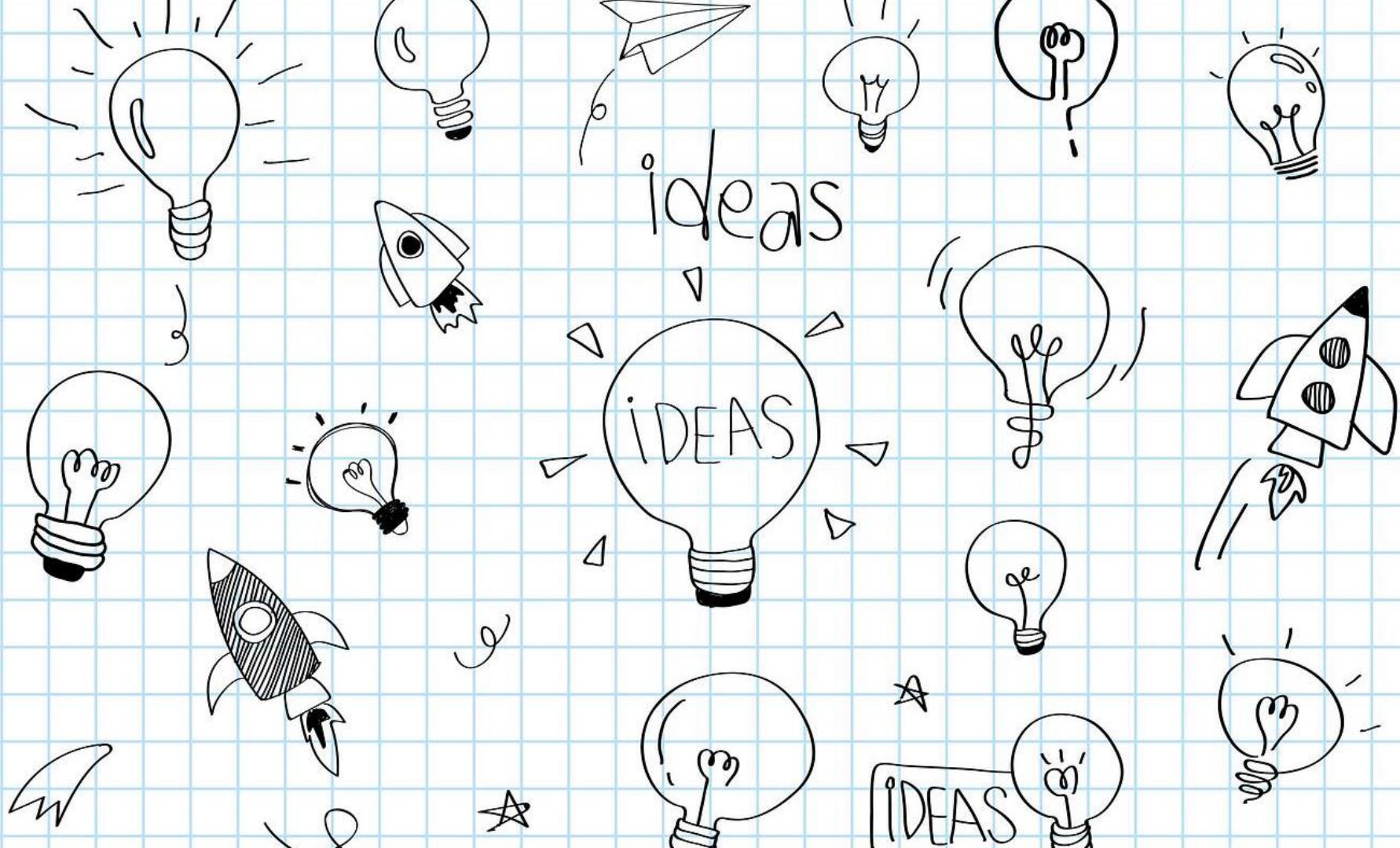
Format:

I believe [describe the specific persons]
experience [describe the difficulty accomplishing the job to be done]
when [describe the experience],
because [describe the limitations or root cause].

WORKSHOP: Part 2

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Who else does our problem affect -- aka who CARES about solving the problem? Or is involved in decision making— create a list of stakeholders beyond the end user
- Why is it significant ... to them? What happens if it goes unsolved? – why does each stakeholder care



Topic #2: Competitors

Competitive Landscape

Provides critical information and tells us a lot about how people are dealing with this problem now.

Direct Competition

Same or similar
to your:



Products & Services



Audience

Price Points



Indirect Competition

Different approach
and has:



Alternative
Products & Services



Audience With
Same Goals

Comparable
Price Points



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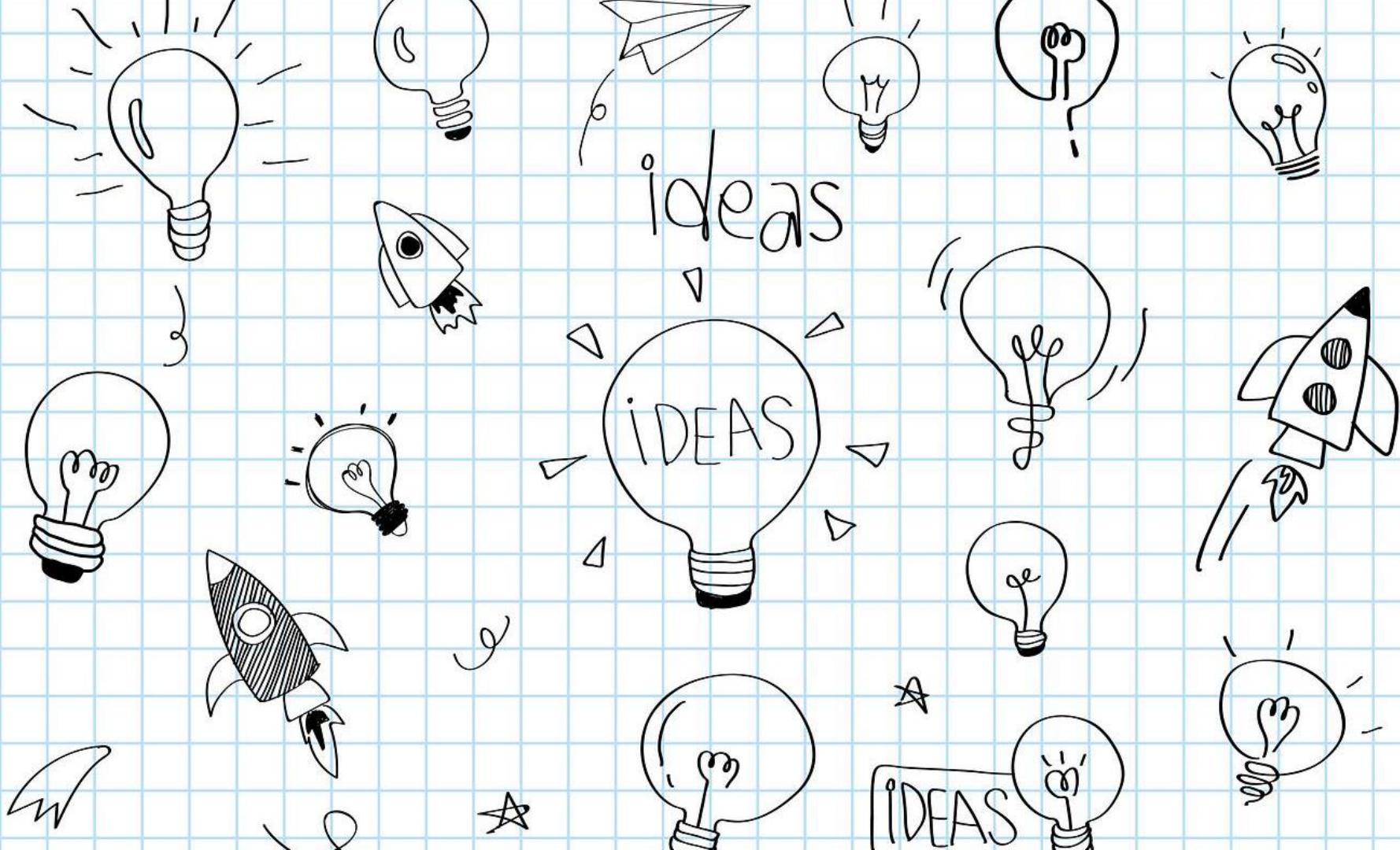
BIG IDEA
CENTER

WORKSHOP: COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

- Who are the competitors?
- Who are their target customers?
- What do people like/dislike about each competitor?

LUNCH Break until 1:15

TEAMS WORK on Competition



Topic #3: Value Proposition

Nailing our Solution to provide the Benefits our customers want = Value Proposition

*Our promise to our customers to solve their problem
better than the alternatives*

VALUE PROPOSITION

Solutions & Benefits

- Clear description of the problem you are solving
- Why our customers want A NEW solution versus how they solve it now
- How your customers benefit from YOUR solution - aka WHY your solution is better than the alternatives

Good Ideas...

ALWAYS make “getting the job done” EASIER!

Simplicity
Convenience or Accessibility
Affordability
Outcomes
(aka why you are better?)

AND provides value to the market by creating **WHAT THEY WANT!**

WORKSHOP: YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Using these examples as a GUIDE, write a value proposition for your idea for EACH STAKEHOLDER!.

- By offering (*competitive advantage*) that no one else can, (*your company*) makes it possible to (*task*) so that (*benefit attained*).
- We know that (*process*) is often complicated – but it doesn't have to be. Thanks to the (*benefit*) of (*product*), (*your company*) makes it simpler than ever to (*task*).
- Unlike (*substitution*), (*your product*) has (*unique feature*), meaning you'll be able to (*task*)



Where do you go from here?

Market Research & Customer Discovery

EVIDENCE THAT GIVES YOU SUPERPOWERS!



Image Credit: World of Super Heros

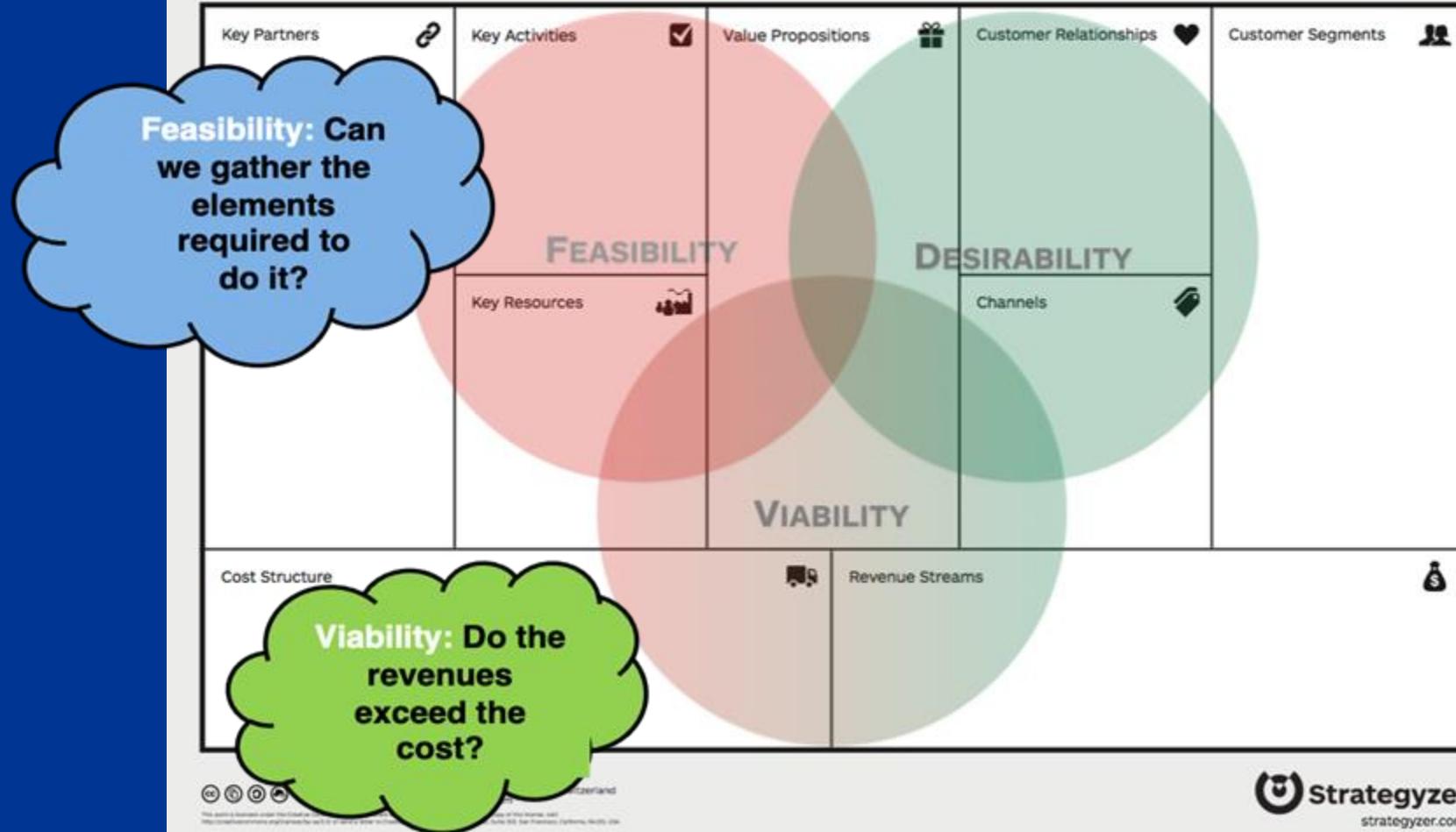
The Business Model Canvas

Designed for:

Designed by:

Date:

Version:

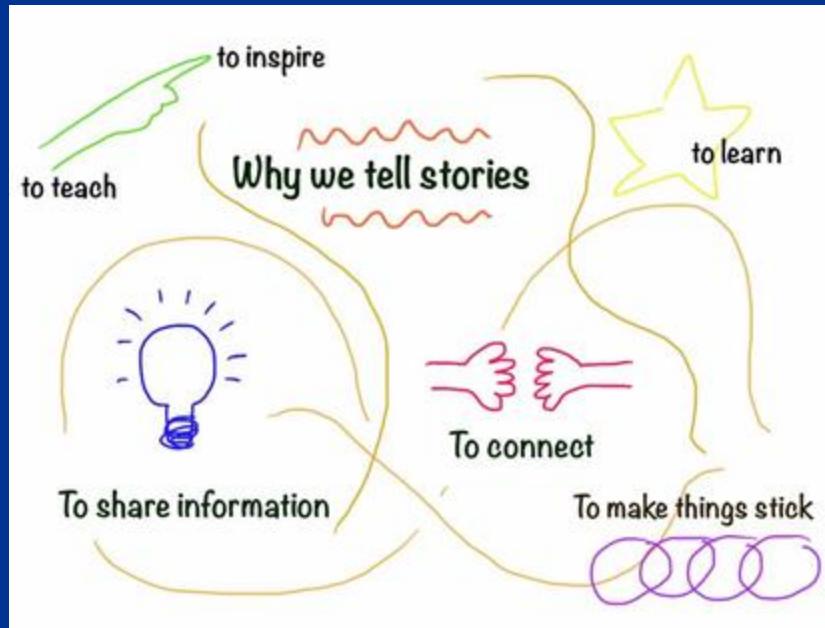


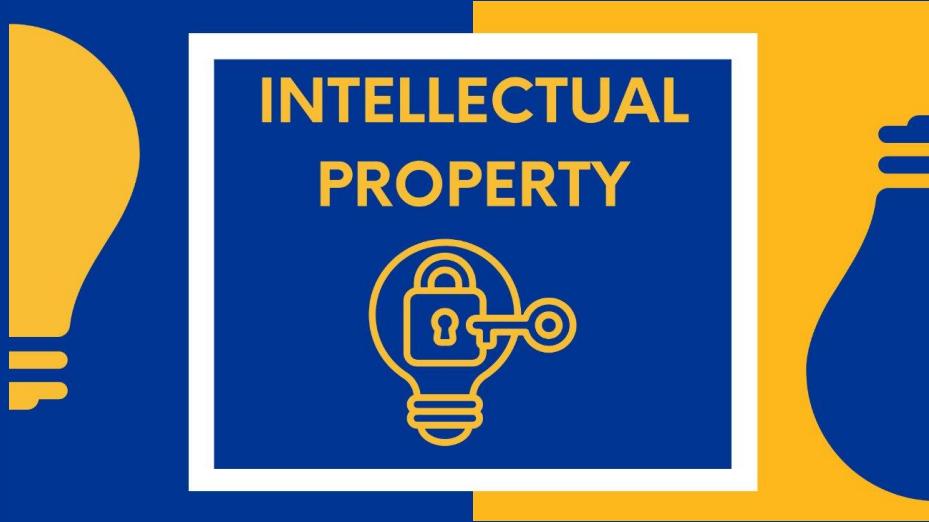
About Pitching

Telling a compelling story with confidence,
evidence, and passion

Presenting, Pitching & Telling Your Story...Oh My!

There are many different times when and many different audiences to whom you will need to tell the story of your idea





PITCHING YOUR IDEA is about WHY
AND WHAT you do, not the inner
workings of HOW

Elements of a Good Story

Strong Beginning



Exciting Middle



Strong Close



Pitching DOs & DON'Ts

DO

- KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE!
- Let your BEST SPOKESPERSON pitch
- Keep your slides SIMPLE – USE MORE VISUALS THAN WORDS
- Be ENTHUSIASTIC
- Be GENUINE
- Maintain EYE CONTACT
- Plan WHO answers WHAT during Q&A
- Practice, PRACTICE, practice

DON'T

- READ your slides
- ASSUME your audience knows your tech/industry (no acronyms)
- GUESS responses
- OVER ANSWER during Q&A
- DISCLOSE sensitive, protectable intellectual property



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Judged PRACTICE PITCH round

- Practice Pitch slots will be 10-minutes per team
- 5-minute presentation followed by 5 minutes for Q&A with judges
- Teams should prepare a short slide deck to present (you will be presenting off your own device!)
- **CHECK YOUR EMAILS FOR LOGISTICS!!**

PRACTICE!
PRACTICE!
PRACTICE!

Other things to help you prepare...

- Make an appointment with an entrepreneur in residence by visiting <https://bigidea.pitt.edu/eirs/>
- If you are looking to expand your team, make a posting on TeamFinder by visiting https://www.bigidea.pitt.edu/resources/teamfinder_2025/
- Gather more evidence and information!
- Questions? Reach out to Big Idea Center staff
 - Jessica Malandro, jmalandro@innovation.pitt.edu
 - Rhonda Schuldt, rschuldt@innovation.pitt.edu
 - Joanna Sutton, jsutton@innovation.pitt.edu

WHAT'S NEXT?

Consider these questions as you prepare for your next steps?

- What is my biggest learning from this weekend?
- Where do I feel my idea is the strongest?
- Where do I feel my idea is the weakest?
- What information could help me strengthen my story?