Diamond Challenge
for High School Entrepreneurs

Preliminary Round
Event Planning Guide
2017

The 2017 Diamond Challenge for High School Entrepreneurs consists of three competitive rounds:

- Preliminary Round – Written Concepts
- Preliminary Round – Pitches (video, for virtual tracks & live, in-person)
- Semifinal Round – Pitches (in Delaware, day before the Youth Entrepreneurship Summit)
- Final Round – Pitches (during the Youth Entrepreneurship Summit)

This document provides details for hosting preliminary round (and in some cases regional final round) pitch events.

HORN PROGRAM COMMITMENT

The Horn Program in Entrepreneurship is committed to supporting the development and delivery of the Diamond Challenge.

For pitch events, this commitment includes:
- When possible, sending at least one Horn Program representative to attend and assist with each preliminary round pitch event (excepting international sites).
- Communicating with registered teams to provide information on event details and logistics. Messages to the teams about the pitch events will be drafted in collaboration with each event site/host. (Typically international sites handle this on their own.)
- Providing guidance on the judging process via the *Diamond Challenge Judging Guide* and onsite participation of a Horn Program representative, when possible. We will also prepare a *Judging Spreadsheet* as specified in the *Judging Guide.*

EVENT HOST/PARTNER EXPECATIONS

Partners who host preliminary round pitch events are vital to the success of the Diamond Challenge. The specific expectations for hosts/partners include:
- Lead the effort to recruit 3-5 judges for every 10 teams scheduled to pitch at the event. Targeting successful entrepreneurs and business leaders to serve as judges is highly recommended and may provide a relevant development opportunity for the host/partner.
- Arrange and pay for catering to meet any food and beverage needs of participants, judges, and other attendees. This will depend on the length and time of day of the partner's event. Access to water for all and coffee/tea/refreshments for judges is expected.
- Arrange and pay for facilities needed to host the event. At a minimum this includes a central meeting room for addressing all participants, 1 presentation room for every 10 teams scheduled to pitch, and 1 room for judges' deliberations. The central meeting room may be able to serve as a presentation room.
- Provide staffing as needed to execute the event plan, including an event emcee and a speaker to promote the host/partner to attendees.
- Conduct the event according to the guidelines provided herein.

PRE-EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST (Recommended)

____ Date and approximate timeframe for pitch event selected (summer/fall of prior year)

____ Facilities reserved (fall of prior year)

____ Number of participating teams determined (4+ weeks prior to event)

____ Judges recruited (4+ weeks prior to event)

____ Event and staffing plan finalized, including final determination of event timing (4+ weeks prior to event)

____ Event details conveyed to Horn Program (4+ weeks prior to event)

____ Email to participants with event details and deadline to send slide decks for pitches (4 weeks prior to event)

____ Slide decks for pitches received from participants and saved to a flash (48 hours prior to event)

____ Pitches, randomly assigned to tracks (if needed) and loaded onto 1-2 laptops (4+ hours prior to event)

____ Event setup (1+ hours prior to event)

____ Host event

EVENT SCHEDULE

The following 4-hour event schedule is recommended. The schedule is designed for a morning start time. Deviations are acceptable but should be discussed with a Horn Program representative to ensure that some consistency across preliminary rounds is maintained. Partners hosting more than one track can have the events occurring simultaneously or one in the morning and another in the afternoon.

Time Allocation	Activity
30 minutes	Check in and networking
15 minutes	Group meeting to review rules, judging, and event schedule
15 minutes	Guest speaker (optional)
90 minutes with break halfway (or 8-10 minutes per team)	Team presentations
30-60 minutes	Judges deliberate and determine winners; participants eat/drink and listen to a speaker talk about the host/partner/sponsor(s), guest speaker 2 (optional)
15-30 minutes	Winners are announced and closing remarks

EVENT STAFFING (Recommended)

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

Overall coordinator (1) – responsible for monitoring the execution of the event plan and ensuring that staff roles are performed.

Registration (2) – check in participants and judges and convey event details.

Event emcee (1) – responsible for leading the sessions involving all participants.

Speaker (1) – responsible for delivering a pitch to participants on behalf of the host and its programs.

Guest speaker (1-2) – inspire participants to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Judging coordinator (1) - responsible for enforcement and interpretation of competition rules as well as briefing the judges on competition rules and scoring prior to the presentations; the coordinator should also be responsible for collecting judges' evaluations, entering them into the judging spreadsheet and tabulating results; a **data entry assistant** (1) may be utilized, if possible/desired.

Technical support (1) – responsible for ensuring the proper function of laptops and projectors for pitches.

Timekeeper/pitch emcee (1 for each presentation room) – responsible for running the room 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 (at least 1 is recommended) – responsible for assisting the overall coordinator, meeting the needs of participants, and helping other staff to perform their role, as needed.

PRESENTATION ETIQUETTE AND JUDGING

Participants should be permitted, but not required, to observe the other teams while they are presenting. Although this may lead the teams that present early to be concerned that the later teams have an advantage, the presentation order is luck of the draw, and we feel the learning benefits from watching other teams far outweighs any concerns about a possible competitive advantage.

Once a presentation begins, all efforts should be made to minimize distractions, including the silencing of cellphones and explicitly requesting that people not text, check email or enter/exit the room during the presentation.

The timekeeper/emcee plays an important role in maintaining presentation etiquette and supervising the judging process. 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 for the duration of the pitch; remind the team that they have 5 minutes to present and that the limit will be strictly enforced; and then invite the team to begin.

Time begins with the first word uttered by the team. Whenever possible, a running countdown of remaining time should be made visible to the presenters.

When the time limit is reached, the emcee should allow the presenter to finish his/her current sentence only. Thereafter, he/she should remind the judges that they have 3 minutes to ask questions about the presentation and invite the judges to ask their first question. Time begins with the first word 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 remain 3 minutes in length.

At the conclusion of the Q&A sessions, judges should be invited to complete their evaluation forms while the emcee announces the next presenting team and provides any needed assistance to get them ready to begin.

PARTICIPANT COMMUNICATION AND EVENT LOGISTICS

Horn Program staff will collaborate with each host/partner to determine what information to convey to participants regarding event timing and logistics. At a minimum, communications will include an event schedule, location and parking/travel information, and instructions on how to submit presentations so that they can be preloaded onto a laptop prior to participants' arrival at the event.

To maintain consistency, communication with teams prior to the event should be initiated by the Horn Program (Note: International partners will be expected to handle all communications with team members regarding event logistics). However, a full set of participant information will be provided before the event to partners for use in last-minute communication and any follow-up communications.

Participants are expected to arrange their own transportation to the pitch events.

EVENT FUNDRAISING AND ATTENDANCE

Each partner is free to use the hosting of a pitch event as an opportunity for fundraising. However, please limit the scope to fundraising for the specific pitch event, rather than the Diamond Challenge in its entirety. We kindly request that any questions about the suitability of a fundraising appeal be discussed with the Horn Program, especially if it might involve the promise of promotional or other benefits at the competition's final round.

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

MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Generating PR is in the best interests of all Diamond Challenge stakeholders. However, it is important to ensure that any media quotes or media engagement with the event is mediated by someone who is well informed about the Diamond Challenge. Therefore, each host/partner should designate a media liaison and instruct all who are involved in staffing the event to refer any questions from media to the liaison.

The Horn Program will lead social media outreach for the Diamond Challenge and events. Hosts/partners are encouraged to provide content from events that can be shared on all social media outlets.