



## **ELEVATE : A National Faith-Based Student Business Plan Competition 2017 General Requirements and Guidelines**

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

Each team must meet the following requirements in order to compete in the 2017 ELEVATE Business Plan Competition:

**Profession of Faith:** ELEVATE is first and foremost a faith-based initiative and therefore each team at a minimum should be led by a CEO who has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and savior. While the number and nature of believers is not a part of the judging criteria, the fact that this venture is from, for and with God is a permission-to-play value.

**Student Enrollment:** The competition is for students 18+ years old currently enrolled in any level of academic education on a full- or part-time basis (i.e., from July 2016 through June 2017) or has recently (from May 2016 on) taken time off specifically to pursue their startup. This includes students who have or will graduate between July and December 2016. Students who graduated in the preceding academic years do not count as a current student. Undergraduate students, graduate students and high school students over the age of 18 are eligible. Students in Certificate programs or other non-degree programs, and Post-docs are excluded.

**Team Size:** No more than three (3) students may serve as presenters. Non-student team members are welcome to travel to an ELEVATE competition with the competing student team, but are prohibited from participating in the presentations or Q&A sessions. The judging criteria does account for completeness of the team so experience shows that single student teams will not score as well. Faculty advisors or other team mentors are also encouraged to attend.

**Student Involvement:** The competition is for student-created and -managed ventures, including new ventures launched by licensing university technology. Students are expected to:

- (1) be the driving force behind the new venture,
- (2) have played the primary role in developing the business plan,
- (3) have key management roles in the venture, and
- (4) own significant equity in the venture.

In general, a member of the student team should be CEO, COO, or President of the venture, or members of the student team should occupy 50% or more of the senior management roles.

Students should own a significant (50% or more) percentage of the equity that is allocated to the management team.

Recognizing that the equity structure of new university-developed research and innovation based ventures may have different equity allocations; the 50% equity ownership rule may be waived in this situation. This waiver will be examined on a case-by-case basis. The ELEVATE National committee has the final decision on which teams are invited to compete in the competition and reserves the right to include or exclude any teams for any reasons.

**Nature of Ventures:** The competition is for new, independent for-profit ventures in the seed, start-up, or early growth stages. Generally excluded are the following: buy-outs, expansions of existing companies, real estate syndications, tax shelters, franchises, licensing agreements for distribution in a different geographical area, and spin-outs from existing corporations. Licensing technologies from universities or research labs is encouraged, assuming they have not been commercialized previously.

**Prior Activity:** Technologies/ideas may be presented in ELEVATE only once. Competing team members may participate in ELEVATE more than once if entering with a new venture/new technology.

Ventures with more than \$100,000 in annual earned revenue in any fiscal year or over \$200,000 total earned revenue in the life of the venture are excluded. Ventures that have raised more than \$250,000 in total capital from any source (including but not limited to awards, debt, equity or grants) other than from the members of the student team or their families before the current academic year (before July, 2016) are excluded. Any amount raised after July 2016 does not affect eligibility.

**Outside Funding:** All ventures must currently be seeking outside capital, typically early stage angel or venture investment. All ventures must be for-profit entities.

**Grand Prize Investment:** The grand prize for the national finals will be worth a total of \$50,000. \$25,000 of the total will be an investment made benefiting ELEVATE which is a nonprofit competition at the current terms at which the winning venture is raising funds. If the winning startup has not yet set terms, mutually agreeable terms will be determined. The investment will be disbursed 50% upon the conclusion of the national finals after the appropriate forms and documentation have been received and validated and 50% six months later to ensure accountability.

The other \$25,000 of the total will be delivered in the form of a membership in the Telos Founder Circle and advisory services in the Telos advisory-based accelerator. Telos Ventures is a national Gospel-centered venture community, accelerator and fund based in Silicon Valley, CA and is a founding sponsor and supporter of ELEVATE. The value of the Founder Circle membership is between \$1200 and \$3600 per year and the value of the advisory services is 1% of equity, which for most startups that have historically applied for ELEVATE would range in value between \$10,000 and \$80,000 depending on valuation.

**Attendance:** By entering the competition, teams commit to attending the National Finals if selected. Travel to the National Finals for the selected teams will be reimbursed following the competition for up to \$1000 per team (and within reason). Receipts and invoices will be required to receive the reimbursements. Teams should plan their return travel NO EARLIER than the morning after the National Finals.

**Required Forms:** Each team will be required to provide appropriate documentation to receive award payments, which may include state incorporation paperwork and/or FEIN forms as well as a current term sheet the startup is using to raise funds. Award investment will be presented only to ventures and not individuals. No prizes will be awarded without the required forms submitted.

**University Sponsored:** While there is no requirement for teams to be sponsored by their school, teams are encouraged to have faculty or other university advisors and have them accompany their team to ELEVATE, but this is not required.

**Application Fee:** There is NO application fee for ELEVATE. This event is made possible through the generosity of our donors and partners who want to support this generation of student entrepreneurs for the Kingdom.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

**Non-confidentiality:** All sessions of the competition, including but not limited to oral presentations and question/answer sessions, are open to the public at large. Any and all of these sessions may be broadcast to interested persons through media, which may include radio, television and the Internet. Any data or information discussed or divulged in public sessions by entrants should be considered information that could possibly enter the public realm, and entrants should not assume any right of confidentiality in any data or information discussed, divulged, or presented in these sessions.

Due to the nature of the competition, we are not able to ask judges, reviewers, our team or the audience to agree to or sign non-disclosure statements. However, ELEVATE will make every effort to limit distribution of business plans presented at the competition. We cannot guarantee that other individuals will not obtain access to electronic or hard copies of the business plan. All presentations are open to the general public, and some presentations may be videotaped. Attendance by media personnel is possible and should be expected.

**Copyrights & Permissions:** If a team uses copyrighted materials and/or images from a third-party in their submissions or presentations, they must obtain permission and authorization in advance from the owners to use this material.

Information presented by the Company at ELEVATE is sole responsibility of the Company. ELEVATE including our partners and host sites has not taken, and does not intend to take any steps to verify the adequacy, accuracy or completeness of any information, materials or statements presented by the Company. The Company, and not ELEVATE, is responsible for ensuring the Company's compliance with all applicable federal, state and other securities laws, and it is solely the Company's responsibility to comply with any of such laws that are applicable. ELEVATE does not give investment advice, endorsement, analysis or recommendations with respect to any securities and is not a broker, venture fund or an investment advisor.

## **Elevate Business Plan <sup>1</sup>Content Recommendation:**

- A. Executive Summary
  - Who we are (including most importantly faith-aspect)
  - What we sell
  - Who we sell to
  - Financial Summary
- B. Company
  - Company Overview
  - Management Team
- C. Products and Services
  - Products and Services
  - Competitors
- D. Target Market
  - Market Overview
  - Market Needs
- E. Strategy and Implementation
  - Marketing Plan
  - Milestones
- F. Financial Plan
  - Revenue Forecast
  - Personnel Plan
  - Budget
  - Cash Flow Assumptions
  - Loans and Investments
- G. Financial Statements
  - Profit and Loss Statement
  - Balance Sheet
  - Cash Flow Statement

**Format:** While the team may chose any format it wishes to submit the application for review (although slide decks are highly recommended), the format for the actual Finals will be a presentation with a time limit and subsequent Q&A and may be accompanied by a slide presentation, product demo, video or other medium.

Please keep in mind that the reviewers will be looking at many submissions so design your application accordingly. Each submission should at least contain a written portion (slide or prose is acceptable). Video or other formats may supplement but not replace the written portion. Because of the geographic diversity of our event and location of reviewers, teams may only submit material digitally.

**Appendices:** Should be included only when they support the findings, statements, and

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<sup>1</sup> LivePlan © 2010–2014 Palo Alto Software. <https://app.liveplan.com/launchpad>

observations in the plan. Because of the number of teams in the competition, judges may not be able to read all the material in the appendices.

**Investment Terms:** The team is not required to reveal the exact desired terms of any financing (i.e., proposed company valuation and percentage of company being offered). However, teams may be asked about these terms and should be prepared to answer these questions in some fashion if it is not already addressed in the presentation. It is up to the team to assess the best way to address this question; however, past experience indicates that some judges may want to know a team's estimated company valuation.

**Competition Presentations:** National Finals presentations will have a limit of ten (10) minutes with an equal length Q&A.

Once a team has finished its presentation, it may observe both the presentation and Q&A session of the teams that follow it. Teams may not observe other presentations until AFTER they have made their presentation. The same observation guidelines apply to team faculty advisors and other special guests of the team.

**Equipment:** Teams should plan to bring a laptop and a copy of their presentation on a zip drive (final presentations may be requested to be emailed or dropboxed 48 hours in advance). Host site venues vary but will contain at least a projector or monitor. Depending on the venue you may need to connect your laptop directly to the projector/monitor or download to a central computer to present. If a team is using Mac laptop, you should bring your own video adapter (be prepared with both mini-dvi as well as HDMI) to be able to connect into the A/V system in the room.

Please let us know if you have any questions or have any special equipment needs. Please note that if your presentation contains special video, graphics, and/or sound, you should let us know in advance, and we will try to help ensure that your presentation works properly at ELEVATE. However, based on past experience, we cannot guarantee that video, graphics, and sound will work 100% of the time.

**Team Media Materials:** Teams will be required to submit materials that will be used in print, web, and other media including:

- Team Descriptions
- Team/Team member photos
- Product or prototype photos (if applicable)
- Company Logo
- School Logo

**Judges Evaluation Criteria:** Business plans and presentations will be evaluated according

to these criteria for invitation to and at the National Finals event:

**Where is God in it? 25%**

- The vision for the startup originated from a clear call
- The founders are intentional about how God is working in and through them
- God is demonstrably moving in this area
- The product or service serves the world

**Is this a good opportunity? 25%**

- There is a significant identified problem
- There is a significant addressable market
- The company has been thoughtfully positioned against competition
- The idea is a viable solution with clear and distinct differentiation
- There is creativity and innovation in product/service, branding, marketing, etc.
- The market timing is appropriate for this concept

**Is this the right team? 25%**

- The team is passionate about solving the problem and clearly love what they do
- The founders have relevant experience and a track record of high performance
- The founders are humble and hungry
- The team is focused and dedicated
- The team is complete or there are appropriately identified potential additions

**Business/Financial Model Design 25%**

- The team has identified a clear and actionable monetization strategy
- There is an identified initial target market and clear sales channels
- The solution is sustainable and scalable
- The team has developed comprehensive and considered financial projections
- Team has undergone customer development to validate/invalidate assumptions

**Bonus Points + 10%**

- The presentation was clear, thoughtful and well put together and delivered
- The startup has proprietary technology or other defensible intellectual property
- The startup is already a going concern with operations, revenue and/or other demonstrable traction
- The founders are supported by a quality advisory team and/or Board of Directors
- There is an inherent WOW factor

*Format and many thoughts from the Elevate Requirements and Guidelines learned from and borrowed with thanksgiving from Rice University's Business Plan Competition. Standing on the shoulders of giants.*