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**Southwest Business  
and Entrepreneur Expo  
Pitch Competition  
2024**

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Pitch Competition Guide

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# CONTENTS

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| COMPETITION OVERVIEW           | 3 |
| ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA           | 4 |
| BUSINESS PLAN PRESENTATION     | 4 |
| JUDGING CRITERIA               | 5 |
| PRIZES                         | 5 |
| CONFIDENTIALITY AND AGREEMENTS | 6 |
| MORE INFORMATION               | 6 |

## COMPETITION OVERVIEW

This document constitutes the official contest entry rules.

### OBJECTIVE

The objective of this competition is to support the development of businesses from ideation or start-up phase to expansion of existing ones looking to diversify or add to their services/product line. It aims to promote and encourage entrepreneurial ventures as an integral part of economic development. It further reflects the commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship of the southwest Manitoba communities and organizations supporting the competition.

### OPPORTUNITY

The Southwest Business and Entrepreneur Expo Pitch Competition is an opportunity for entrepreneurs to win prize awards to help accelerate their business.

### PROCESS

- Step 1: Send in an application form
- Step 2: Review and selection of pitch entries
- Step 3: Live pitch competition

### IMPORTANT DATES

- Applications Open: November 14, 2023
- Application Deadline: January 16, 2024
- Notifications of Live Pitch Entries: January 19, 2024
- Plan Submission Deadline: February 2, 2024
- Live Pitch Competition: February 7, 2024

### LOCATION

The live pitch or business plan presentation will be held at the Deloraine Winchester Community Complex, located at 119 Lake Street, Deloraine, MB. Business owners must be available to pitch their idea in person. If an entrant is unavailable during this time, they must send a representative to present and answer judges' questions.

All current Manitoba Public Health Orders will be adhered to at time of event.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The competition is open to the general public. To join, businesses must satisfy the following criteria:

- Must be geographically located in the participating southwest Manitoba communities, or in trade areas where a supporting organization has a presence in.
- Start-ups – Must have ideas or business models in the start-up phase. Priority will be given to businesses that have been operating for two years or less.
- Existing businesses – For those that have been operating for more than two years. Priority will be given to businesses that are on expansion mode in terms of: offering a new product, service, entering a new market or opening a new branch location in any of the participating communities.
- Applications must be complete. This includes a brief overview on the business idea, reason to participate, launch or expansion strategy, and overall direction.
- The Expo Committee reserves the right to vet entries based on consistency with eligibility requirements and alignment with the overall mission of the Expo's Business Pitch Competition.
- Past contestants may apply, subject to review and acceptance will be at the discretion of the Expo Committee.

## BUSINESS PLAN PRESENTATION

Each entrant will be required to present their business idea to a panel of 3 – 4 judges with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. This is an open session with the presenter/s, judges, timekeeper, possibly other entrants, and Expo attendees. A laptop and projector for the presentation will be provided.

PowerPoint presentations are to be emailed to [swbusinessexpo@gmail.com](mailto:swbusinessexpo@gmail.com) or to any Expo Committee member at least two business days (Feb. 5, 2024, by 4pm) before the live pitch. If they are not received ahead of time, we cannot guarantee that visuals will be available, or the file will not have issues during presentation. Entrants are encouraged to bring promotional materials or sample products for the judges. These may be given on the day of the live pitch.

Business owners will have 10 minutes for the live pitch. This will be followed by a question-and-answer portion. Each of the judges will be given the opportunity to ask the presenter one question. Pre-recorded business pitch presentations will not be accepted. The owner(s) or their representative(s) must be at the live pitch to answer judges' questions.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

The panel of judges consists of experts in the field of entrepreneurship. Elements of the live pitch or business plan presentation will be judged on how well these sections are addressed:

- Clearly defined business idea
- The need being addressed by the business
- Competition
- Operations plan
- Financials
- Marketing and sales
- Risk

The written business plan to be submitted prior to the live pitch will be sent to the judges for advance reading and as reference during the presentation. A copy of the judging checklist is included in this package. Entrants are responsible to read and become familiar with the judging criteria and critical elements on the checklist.

All decisions of the judges are final and will not be subject to appeal.

## PRIZES

Prize categories and geographic area will be dependent on stipulations from the prize sponsors.

There will be an award ceremony at the end of the Expo to announce the winners of the competition. Actual prizes will be disbursed or awarded to winners based on the prize sponsors' criteria or stipulations.

As an example, a sponsor may issue the cheque right after the competition. On the other hand, a different sponsor may prefer to issue the pitch prize after a prescribed period i.e., 6 months, with other conditions, such as: giving monthly status reports on how the business is doing and submission of receipts where the prize money will be used to reimburse eligible business expenses.

The winners are solely responsible for payment of any applicable taxes and reporting any taxable income associated with winning the competition. The prizes cannot be substituted or transferred to a third party.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

Competitors are aware that neither the organizers nor judges will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA). The competition is open to the public, and participants should be selective with the information they share during the sessions. Background information on the respective pitches may be summarized for promotional purposes. Ultimately, protection of sensitive materials is the sole responsibility of the entrants.

By entering this competition, the business owners expressly consent to the use of his/her photos and personal information submitted with the entry for the purposes of storing, sharing with prize sponsors, and Expo promotions.

The Expo Committee reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to void any entry and/or withdraw, suspend, amend, or terminate this competition in whole or in part (or to amend these rules) in any way at any time without prior notice for any reason that will compromise the integrity of the competition.

### MORE INFORMATION

The competition is administered by the Southwest Business and Entrepreneur Expo Committee comprised of the following communities:

- Municipality of Deloraine-Winchester
- Municipality of Grassland
- Municipality of Pipestone
- Municipality of Sifton
- Town of Melita
- Town of Virden
- Municipality of Brenda-Waskada
- Municipality of Two Borders
- Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth

Any questions, comments or complaints regarding the competition may be directed to:

Email: [swbusinessexpo@gmail.com](mailto:swbusinessexpo@gmail.com)

Phone: 204-747-3668

Website: [www.swbusinessexpo.com](http://www.swbusinessexpo.com)

Facebook: Southwest Business & Entrepreneur Expo