

2026 SXSW Pitch Qualifying and Coaching Committee

The **SXSW Pitch Qualifying Committee** plays a pivotal role in maintaining the integrity and operational excellence of the SXSW Pitch competition. This committee is responsible for managing the intake and preliminary evaluation of all submitted business plans. Its primary functions include verifying the **accuracy, completeness, and authenticity** of each application, as well as ensuring the **proper categorization** of submissions within the competition framework. Through meticulous review and validation, the committee upholds the credibility and fairness of the selection process, contributing significantly to the event's overall quality and reputation.

The **SXSW Pitch Coaches Committee** provides essential guidance and professional support to the selected finalists in the months preceding the event. Drawing upon extensive industry experience, committee members work directly with participants to refine their **presentation content, delivery, and overall stage presence**. This structured coaching process is designed to enhance the clarity, persuasiveness, and professionalism of each pitch, thereby optimizing the quality of presentations delivered during the competition.

Together, these committees form the foundation of the SXSW Pitch program, ensuring a rigorous, transparent, and supportive environment for participants. Their combined efforts are instrumental in sustaining the event's standing as a premier platform for innovation and entrepreneurial excellence.

Facilitators

Dean Cruse

DC Marketing

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/dean-cruse-marketing/>

Qualifiers

Greg Wright

HatchPitch

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/gregorykwright/>

Pre-Event Coaching

Mellini Monique

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mellinimonique/>

On-Site Coaching

Meha Agrawal
Silk and Sonder
www.silkandsonder.com
Coach

Colin Ananwaty
Take Command
www.takecommandhealth.com
Qualifier

Katie Baker
Elevance Health
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/katiepbaker>
Coach

Mikell Becker
BLUE LANCE 2.0, Incorporated
<https://bluelance.com>
Coach

Adam Berk
Startup Program Design
<https://www.startupprogramdesign.com>
Coach

Bart Bohn
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bart-bohn>
Coach

Peter Botting
Peter Botting - StoryPower®
www.peterbotting.co.uk
Coach

Shelly Brenckman
1876 Ventures
<https://1876ventures.com/>
Coach

Mary Brendza
Curated for You
<https://www.curatedforyou.io>

Qualifier

Lottie Byram

Dingman-Lamone Center for Entrepreneurship

<https://www.rhsmith.umd.edu/centers-initiatives/dingman-lamone-center>

Coach

Molly Cain

Redhorse Corporation

<https://linkedin.com/in/mollycain>

Coach

Valerie Chan

Plat4orm

www.plat4orm.com

Coach

Kyle Cox

ATP Fund

<https://www.atpfund.com/>

Coach

Michael Crider

Crider Company

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/michaelpcrider/>

Qualifier

Garrett Dailey

Lucid

<https://www.pitchlucid.com>

Coach

Liz Deering

Haven

www.impacthaven.com

Coach

Matt DiPaola

Fractional CMO

<https://thefractionalcmo.co/>

Qualifier

Christine DiPietro

Independent

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/christinedipietro/>

Qualifier

Candice Digby

Armadillo World Headquarters

www.armadilloworld.com

Qualifier

Leslie Elder

Nevoya

<https://www.nevoya.com/>

Qualifier

Sloan Foster

Sloan Seasonings

<https://www.sloanseasonings.com>

Qualifier

Marlinda Galapon

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/marlindagal/>

Coach

Jonathan Ha

AMD

<https://www.amd.com/en.html>

Coach

Tim Hines

Marketing Starter Group

<https://tnhines.com/consulting>

Qualifier

Bull Holland

Bull Holland LLC

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bullholland/>

Coach

Jack Hudson

Tesla

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jnhudson/>

Qualifier

Lourdes Juan

Knead Technologies

www.kneadtch.com

Coach

Kaz Karwowski

Rice University

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kaz-karwowski/>

Coach

Teri Kelly

Independent

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/teri-kelly-416671/>

Qualifier

Katina Kenyon

Applaudo

<http://applaudostudios.com/>

Coach

Esmaeil Khakasani

Gramour

Qualifier

Rashmi Kilam

Bouin Capital

<https://www.bouincapital.com>

Coach

Russell Kischuk

Danger Close Advisory

<https://www.dangerclose.io/>

Coach

Soo-Jin Lee

Netflix

www.soo-jinlee.com

Coach

Starr Long

The Acceleration Agency

<https://taa.io/#/>

Qualifier

Jonathan Lowenhar

Enjoy The Work

www.enjoythework.com

Coach

Amy MacDougall

Boston Consulting Group

<https://www.bcg.com/about/people/experts/amy-macdougall-hurwitz>

Coach

Christopher MacPherson

Lovelace AI

www.lovelace.ai

Coach

Paulo Machado

Health Innovation

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/paulojmachado/>

Coach

Jake McKee

Jake McKee Consulting

<https://jakemckee.com/>

Coach

Rob Austin McKee

<https://www.robaustinmckee.com>

Coach

Robert McKee

Cypress Associates

<https://www.cyprs.com/>

Coach

Steve McKnew

Innovation Consultant

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/stevenmcknew2/>

Coach

Haidee McMahon

SEAPINK Partners Ltd

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/seapinkpartners/>

Coach

Bryan McQuary

Carrier Corporation

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bryanmcquary/>

Coach

Meghan Michaels

Imagine Believe Realize, LLC

www.teamibr.com

Coach

Roberto Moctezuma

Fractal River, LLC

www.fractralriver.com

Coach

Mellini Monique

Voxversa

<https://LinkedIn/in/MelliniMonique>

Coach

Molly Montgomery

Bridgepoint Consulting

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mollymontgomery/>

Qualifier

Will Neder

AgentPress

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/will-neder-7920842b/>

Coach

Jon Nordby

Anthropy

www.anthropypartners.com

Coach

Robert Olivier

GrubTubs

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/insects>

Qualifier

Rachelle Oribio

SolverX

www.solverx.com

Coach

Sofia Pessanha

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sofiapessanha/>

Coach

Mark Phillip

Are You Watching This?!

<https://areyouwatchingthis.com>

Qualifier

Sajeev Prelis

CyberGuard Advantage

<https://www.cgcompliance.com/>

Coach

Rachelle Samson Oribio

SolverX

www.solverx.com

Qualifier

Arjita Sethi

New Founder School

<https://newfounderschool.com/>

Coach

Russ Somers

Fourth Envelope Marketing

<https://fourthenvelope.com>

Qualifier

Sarah Spear

Tradeverifyd

<https://tradeverifyd.com/>

Coach

Sarah Spear

Traderverifyd

<https://tradeverifyd.com/>

Qualifier

Mike Steely

Luminark Global

<https://luminark.ai/>

Coach

Mark Streich

npv10
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/markstreich/>
Coach

Donnie Stroud
Lonesome Street Films
<https://lonesomestreetfilms.com>
Coach

Jennifer Tacheff
Manifest Advisors
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jtacheff/>
Coach

Anita Tuisiani
Sagely & Co
<https://sagelyco.com/>
Qualifier

Matt Udvari
Speech Graphics
<http://www.speech-graphics.com>
Qualifier

Valerie Vacante
Dentsu
<https://www.dentsu.com/us/en/solutions>
Qualifier

Adam Weinroth
Form Bio
<https://www.formbio.com>
Qualifier

Adam Wulf
Muse
<https://museapp.com/>
Coach

Ron Yerkes
Consultant
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ron-yerkes-086807/>
Coach

Gabriella Zielke

Author

<https://www.gabriellazielke.com/>

Coach