



WELCOME

TO THE 2026 CRAFTING A WINNING SUBMISSION PANEL

JUNE 17, 2026



Thank You

To Our Host



KEVIN BESI KOF

Partner

EISNERAMPER

WELCOME OUR PANEL



SCOTT LITMAN

Traction Capital
MN Cup Co-Founder



DAN TENENBAUM

Lathrop GPM
MN Cup Judge



KEVIN BESI KOF

EisnerAmper
MN Cup Judge



DORI JONES

AcQumen Medical
2025 MN Cup Grand Prize Winner



KATE SIEGRIST

EisnerAmper
MN Cup Judge



ROUND TWO DELIVERABLES

June 17th, 2026

Submission Deadline – Monday July 20 @ Noon

- **Executive Summary Business Plan**
 - 2 pages
 - Template Provided
- **Pitch Deck**
 - 15 pages excluding cover page
- **1-minute Video**
- **Financial Projections**



Business Plan Executive Summary

- **Short, clear and concise**
- **How/why you will be successful**
- **Opportunity, plan & progress:**
 - Innovation & Scale
 - Thoughtful approach; awareness of risks
 - Progress against milestones

RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS:

- Company Summary
- Management Team
- Problem
- Solution – Product/Service,
- Value Proposition
- Target Market & Size
- Competition & Positioning
- Business Model – Activities, Partners, Channels, Unit Economics
- Sales & Distribution
- Financial Results & Projections

Presentation

- **Visually engaging to bring executive summary to life:**
 - Photos, images, charts, positioning matrix, bullet points, tables
- **Initial submission will be read by judges:**
 - Needs to be a stand-alone document
 - More than pictures!
- **Finalist round presentations in August can be updated**

Video - Visually Demonstrate Your Concept/Impact

Possible approaches:

- Product/service overview you could use on your website
- Prototype demonstration
- Customer testimonials affirming your value proposition
- Company culture and team
- Share examples, suggestions, etc.



GREGG LITMAN

U.S. BANK

June 17th, 2026

Why video?



Video tells your story

- Shows you something
- Takes you somewhere
- Introduces you to someone



Video tells your story efficiently

- 60 seconds = 120 words
- Leverage the power of audio + video to create memorable messages



Make Your Minute Count

Problem
+
Solution
+
Explanation



Simple as 1 – 2 – 3



WHAT ARE WE
SAYING?



WHAT ARE WE
SHOWING?



WHAT ARE THEY
HEARING?

Do's and Don'ts



- DON'T: Go Over 60 Seconds
- DON'T: Just Talk to the Camera
- DON'T: Use Jargon or Acronyms
- DON'T: Jump to Your Conclusion
- DON'T: Repurpose Wrong Stuff

Do's and Don'ts



- DO: Tell Your Story
- DO: Create Context
- DO: Include Pain Points & Value Prop
- DO: Use It Elsewhere Everywhere

Examples





MN Cup SignalGrab

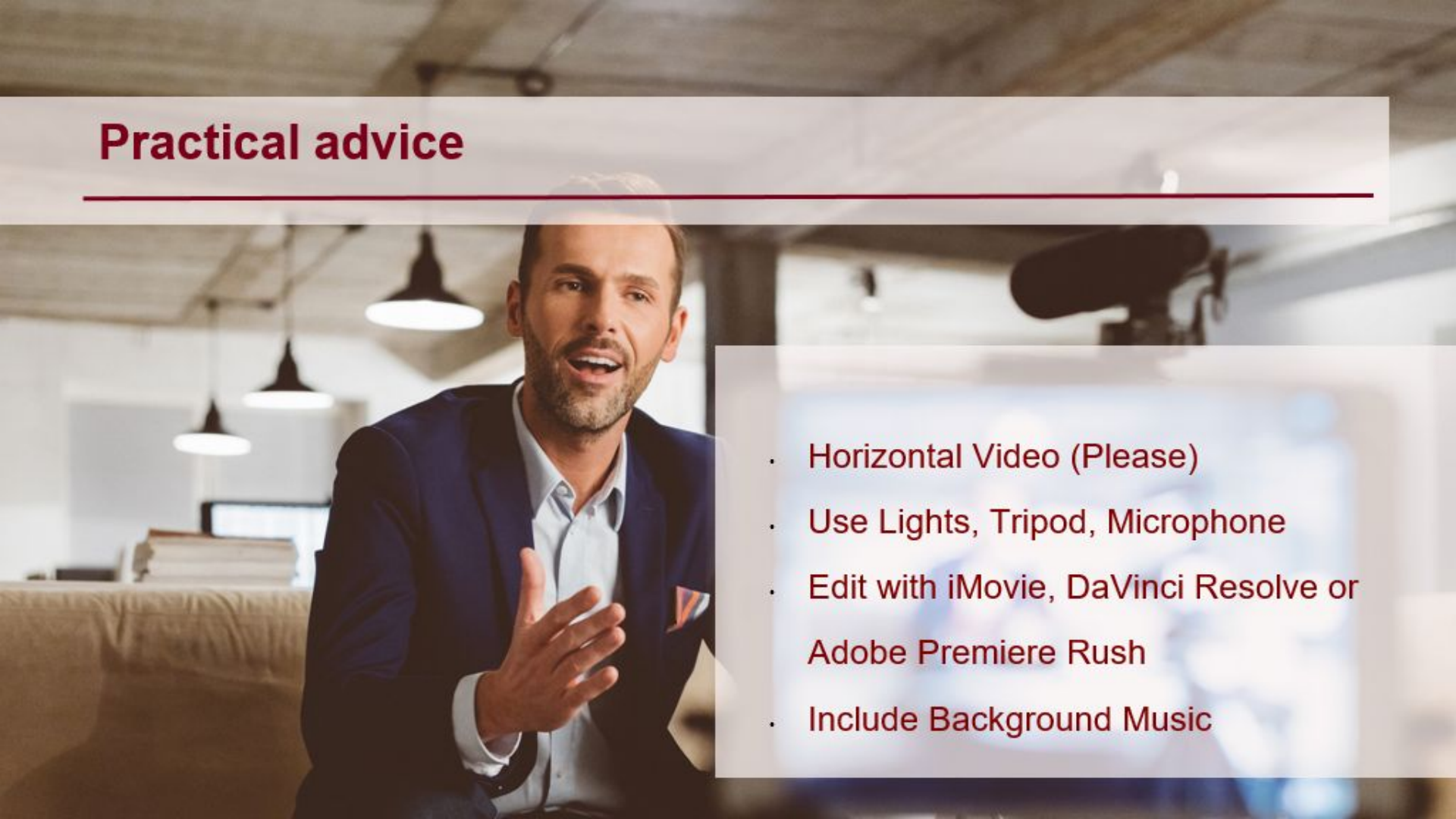






The Future of Kitty Cleanup is Here!

Practical advice

- 
- A man with a beard, wearing a blue suit jacket over a light blue shirt, is speaking and gesturing with his hands. He is in a studio or office environment with industrial-style lighting (pendant lights) and a professional microphone on a boom arm visible in the background. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the speaker.
- Horizontal Video (Please)
 - Use Lights, Tripod, Microphone
 - Edit with iMovie, DaVinci Resolve or Adobe Premiere Rush
 - Include Background Music

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MN Cup Judge



DORI JONES

ACQUMEN MEDICAL
2025 MN CUP GRAND PRIZE WINNER

June 17th, 2026

Dori Jones, AcQumen Medical

AcQumen Medical is developing the first ultrasound and impedance-driven hemodynamic monitor for noninvasive, continuous, and accurate cardiac output in pediatric patients

- 2025 MN Cup Grand Prize Winner



MN Cup Alumni Advice

- Judge feedback is gold! Take it into consideration every step of the way
- Treat the next round of deliverables like due diligence, not a pitch competition
- You haven't done it all yet - a solid strategy is just as commendable as traction or milestones you've already achieved
- Show how you fit into this incredible MN startup ecosystem
- Be genuine! There's a reason you're here - people believe in the problem you're solving. Share your "why"





GUIDANCE & ADVICE

June 17th, 2026

General Advice

- **Your plan tells the story of your business / opportunity**
- **Write for your audience**
 - **This may include judges with domain expertise**
 - **This may include judges that are not**
- **Share validation, customer perspectives, feedback, quotes**
- **Think big!**

Problem

- Trends
- Implications
- Urgency – why now?
- Current remedies – who feels the pain?
- Who will be motivated to fund the solution?



Solution

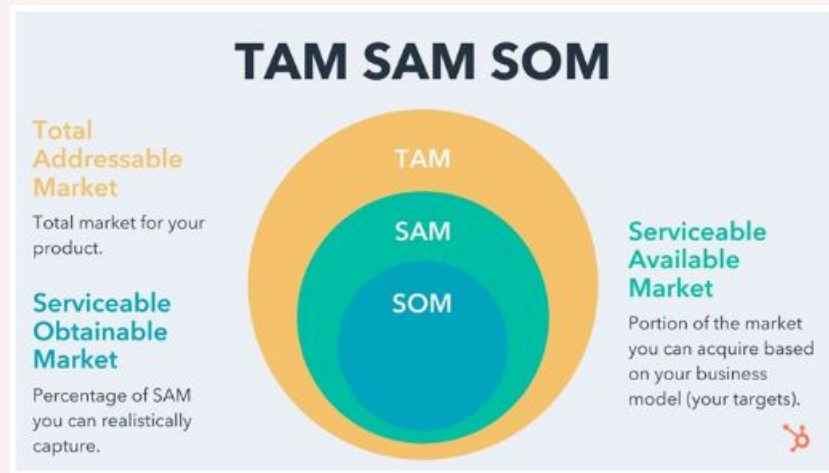
- **Value Proposition – compelling benefits**
- **Target Customer/Persona**
- **Relevant Use Cases**
- **Innovation & Differentiation**



HUMMINGBIRD® TTS
PRECEPTIS MEDICAL

Market Opportunity

- **Market Size**
 - Addressable/Serviceable/Obtainable
 - Get specific!
- **Target Segment(s)**
- **Meaningful Analogs**



Marketing vs. Sales

Marketing

- **Marketing Strategy:**
 - Segmentation, targeting & positioning
- **Future product roadmap**
- **How will you create awareness?**
 - Not a lengthy list; actual results
- **Pricing justification:**
 - Comparison with reference products

Sales

- **Sales channels:**
 - How will you reach your customers?
 - Where to start? Change over time?
- **Sales or distribution partners?**
 - Understand unit economics, incentives
 - Sales process/cycle/influencers?
- **Cost of acquisition?**
 - Does margin justify cost/sale?

Competition

- There is **ALWAYS** competition or alternatives
- What is your unfair advantage?
- How can you de-risk the opportunity for investors or customers?



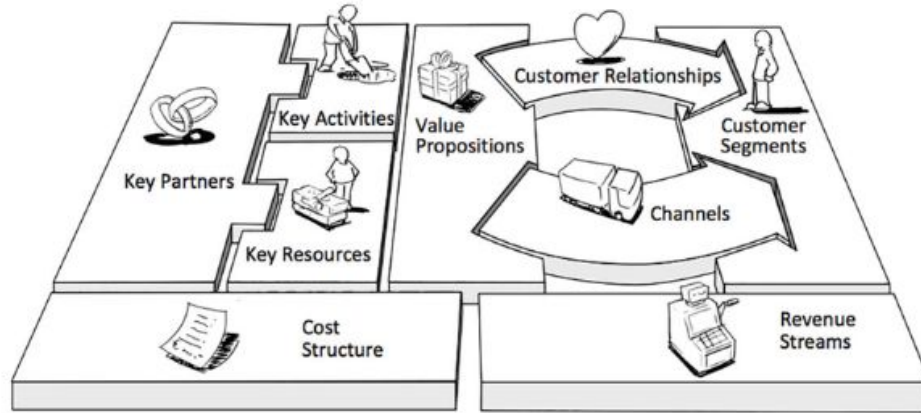
Progress & Milestones

- **Real tangible milestones:**
 - Customer discovery and product-market fit
 - Customers, trials, users, prototypes, partners, investors, team, patents
 - Meaningful metrics
- **Future milestones on a timeline:**
 - Product roadmap
 - Clinical trials, user testing, etc.
 - Capital expenditures & funding

*Judges/Investors want to see you do
what you said you were going to do!*



Business Model



- **Key Activities**
- **Partners**
- **Channels**
- **Revenue Streams**
- **Cost Structure**

Financial Projections

- Project 3-5 years of income statement, balance sheet and cash flows
- Assumptions matter – include clear summary!
- Unit economics – price, cost of sales, cost of sale/acquisition, margins
- Top Down vs Bottom Up
- Estimated capital requirements and sources of capital over time
- Include historical results/progress

*Template from EisnerAmper is available
on the Semifinalist Website*



Why Run Your Pitch Deck & Forecast Through AI

AI sharpens your story and pressure-tests your numbers so you walk into the room ready for investor scrutiny.



A Tighter Investor Story

Sharpens your narrative so every slide builds the case — clear problem, compelling traction, and a logical path to the ask.



Stress-Tested Numbers

Probes the assumptions behind your forecast and flags weak spots, so your projections hold up under investor diligence.



Anticipates Tough Questions

Surfaces the objections and edge cases VCs will raise on market size, unit economics, and growth — before you're on the spot.



Scenario-Ready Forecasts

Models best, base, and worst cases in seconds, letting you show command of the numbers and defend your valuation with confidence.

Risk & Mitigation

- **Awareness of major challenges and risks:**
 - Regulatory, technology, market, financing, operations
- **Plans/options to mitigate major risks**
- **Thoughtful approach and plan to test and develop business concept**

Team & Advisors

- Founding Team – background and why it is relevant to success
- Advisors or Advisory Board – get their approval
- Identify gaps – not expected to be complete
- Investors or Strategic Partners (and potential exit)

Other Information

- **Appendices/Links**
- **Press Coverage**
- **Social Media**
- **Schematics/Wireframes**
- **Sales Sheets/Ads**

*Judges are not required to read -
but you can entice them*



QUESTIONS?