

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Open Space: Participatory Space Education and Outreach (8)

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BEST PRACTICES OF PITCH COMPETITIONS, DIFFERENCES FOR THE SPACE INDUSTRY,
AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SPACE COMMERCIALIZATION STARTUPS**Abstract**

Besides winning the prize, pitch competitions have a much greater goal in educating entrepreneurial thinking, through simulating real-world processes, such as developing successful products from ideas. The broad intentions vary from having better teams, preparing participants for international, intercultural, and interdisciplinary teamwork, developing new products, engaging employees in new areas, even the launch of a startup. Pitch competitions in their nature, can be a playground for all disciplines, in working together, validating ideas, elaborating products, transforming business ideas to business models, and much more. Current models of pitch competitions are either locally or internationally organized. Locally hosted pitch competitions tend to follow a standard formula: based on originating ideas, teams are formed by people working locally together. Followed by early ideation and team building processes, the collaborative work with the goal of developing winning presentations, products, or services comes after the team found common ground. International pitch competitions extend this formula, with organizing competitions between teams in different locations. While these competitions allow the opportunity for teams and institutions to collaborate and compete in an international environment, for participation, a local presence in either location is required. In global acting industries, like the space industry, idea and team facilitation cannot be location dependent. Within the space industry, distributed teams over countries and time-zones are common. The need of a local presence to participate at pitch competitions is a limitation in simulating real world processes, related to idea validation, teamwork, or product development, within space projects. The mentioned restriction shows the need to develop new and more flexible methods to support international, cross-disciplinary, and multi-cultural pitch competitions. This paper proposes to build the needed foundation with researching best practices in current local and international organized pitch competitions and investigates space related limitations. The three main stages, early ideation, team building, and customer validation, will be analyzed separately, explaining their implications for the space industry and to identify potential enhancements. The result will be a curated best practice catalogue, which continues to evolve, showing needed adjustments for pitch competitions in space, and deliver enduring educational and commercial value of collaborative processes across disciplines and locations. By knowing current best practices and the implications for pitch competitions in space, new methods and solutions to enhance the outcome of space related pitch competitions and launch of startups can be triggered.

Keywords: Best Practice, Startups, Pitch Competitions, Space Ventures.