

## Palmetto Cup Judging Criteria

Judges will use 5 categories to determine which founders will be finalists: team competencies, market size, opportunities for growth, originality, and pitch. Founders will be graded on a 1-5 scale for each category and the sum of points from each category will be accumulated for a final score.

### TEAM - Competencies

- **1-** The team demonstrates significant deficiencies or gaps in the competency being assessed. The team struggles to meet the required standards or expectations, and improvements are urgently needed.
- **2-** The team's competency falls below the desired level. While they may have some basic understanding or skills, there are notable areas for improvement and development.
- **3-** The team meets the expected competency level. They possess the necessary skills and knowledge to perform adequately in the area being assessed. This rating suggests a satisfactory level of performance without outstanding achievements.
- **4-** The team exhibits a higher-than-average level of competency. They excel in the area being assessed and consistently perform at a level that exceeds the standard expectations. They demonstrate a deeper understanding and application of the competency.
- **5-** The team's competency is exceptional and stands out significantly. They demonstrate a mastery of the competency being assessed and consistently exceed expectations. This rating represents an exemplary level of performance.

### MARKET - Opportunity and Size

- **1- Limited (1):** The market size and opportunity for the startup are significantly limited. The market may be niche or small, with few potential customers or limited growth potential. The opportunity for success or significant market share is minimal.
- **2- Small (2):** The market size and opportunity for the startup are relatively small. While there may be some potential customers and room for growth, the market may still be constrained in terms of size or competition. The opportunity for success or substantial market penetration is moderate.
- **3- Average (3):** The market size and opportunity for the startup are average. The market is reasonably sized with a decent number of potential customers and growth potential. The opportunity for success or capturing a significant market share is realistic and achievable.
- **4- Promising (4):** The market size and opportunity for the startup are promising. The market is substantial, with a significant number of potential customers and ample room for growth. The opportunity for success or capturing a significant market share is high, and the startup has a good chance of making an impact.
- **5- Lucrative (5):** The market size and opportunity for the startup are highly lucrative. The market is large and expanding, with a significant number of potential customers and abundant growth potential. The opportunity for success or capturing a substantial market

share is exceptional, and the startup has excellent prospects for significant profitability and market dominance.

### **GROWTH - Business model clarity, viability, sustainability, opportunities for investment and acquisition**

- **1- Poor (1):** The startup's business model is unclear, lacks viability, and is unsustainable. There are significant flaws or uncertainties that make it difficult to understand how the startup will generate revenue or sustain its operations. Opportunities for investment and acquisition are highly unlikely.
- **2- Below Average (2):** The startup's business model is somewhat unclear, and there are doubts about its viability and sustainability. There may be some potential, but key elements or strategies need improvement or clarification. Opportunities for investment and acquisition are limited.
- **3- Average (3):** The startup's business model is reasonably clear and has some viability and sustainability. It demonstrates a basic understanding of how to generate revenue and sustain operations. While there may be room for improvement, the startup has moderate potential for attracting investment and acquisition opportunities.
- **4- Above Average (4):** The startup's business model is clear, viable, and sustainable. It shows a well-defined strategy for revenue generation, cost management, and scalability. The startup has a strong potential to attract investment and acquisition interest due to its solid business fundamentals.
- **5- Excellent (5):** The startup's business model is highly clear, innovative, and demonstrates exceptional viability and sustainability. It exhibits a unique and compelling value proposition, a well-defined target market, and a solid plan for growth and profitability. The startup has outstanding potential for attracting significant investment and acquisition opportunities.

### **ORIGINALITY - of idea/product**

- **1- Unoriginal (1):** The idea, product, or service offered by the startup lacks originality. It is highly derivative or similar to existing offerings in the market. There is little to no novelty or unique value proposition associated with the startup's offering.
- **2- Somewhat Original (2):** The idea, product, or service has some degree of originality, but there are aspects that are not entirely unique. While there may be minor differentiating factors, the startup's offering does not significantly stand out from existing alternatives.
- **3- Moderately Original (3):** The idea, product, or service has a moderate level of originality. It introduces some unique elements or features that differentiate it from existing offerings in the market. The startup's offering has the potential to attract attention and interest due to its distinctive aspects.
- **4- Highly Original (4):** The idea, product, or service offered by the startup is highly original and demonstrates significant novelty. It brings fresh ideas, innovative approaches, or unique value propositions to the market. The startup's offering stands out from existing alternatives and has the potential to disrupt or create a new niche.

- **5- Extremely Original (5):** The idea, product, or service is exceptionally original, groundbreaking, or disruptive. It introduces a highly innovative concept or solves a problem in a novel and unprecedented way. The startup's offering is revolutionary and has the potential to reshape industries or create entirely new markets.

**PITCH - presentation quality, storytelling (not reading a list), captivating**

- **1- Poor (1):** The pitch presentation is of low quality, lacking structure, coherence, and visual appeal. The storytelling is ineffective, and the presentation fails to engage or captivate the audience. The pitch lacks clarity and fails to effectively communicate the startup's value proposition.
- **2- Below Average (2):** The pitch presentation has some flaws in terms of quality and structure. The storytelling may be somewhat disjointed or unclear, making it difficult to capture and maintain the audience's attention. The presentation does not leave a strong impact or create a lasting impression.
- **3- Average (3):** The pitch presentation is decent in terms of quality and organization. The storytelling is somewhat engaging and effectively communicates the startup's value proposition. While the presentation may lack certain elements to fully captivate the audience, it successfully conveys the key messages.
- **4- Above Average (4):** The pitch presentation is of high quality and well-structured. The storytelling effectively captures the audience's attention and keeps them engaged throughout. The presentation is visually appealing and supports the key messages of the startup's value proposition, leaving a positive and memorable impression.
- **5- Excellent (5):** The pitch presentation is exceptional in terms of quality, storytelling, and captivating the audience. It is well-crafted, engaging, and memorable. The startup effectively uses compelling narratives, visuals, and delivery techniques to leave a lasting impact on the audience, making them enthusiastic and eager to learn more.