

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

Qualifiers

[Greg Wright](#)

HatchPitch

Pre-Event Coaching

[Mellini Monique](#)

On-Site Coaching

Coaches and Qualifiers

Meha Agrawal

[Silk and Sonder](#)

Coach

Colin Ananwaty

[Take Command](#)

Qualifier

Katie Baker

[Elevance Health](#)

Coach

April Beasley

[RCKT](#)

Coach

Mikell Becker

[BLUE LANCE 2.0, Incorporated](#)

Coach

Adam Berk

[Startup Program Design](#)

Coach

Bart Bohn

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Coach

Peter Botting

[Peter Botting - StoryPower®](#)

Coach

Shelly Brenckman

[1876 Ventures](#)

Coach

Mary Brendza

[Curated for You](#)

Qualifier

Lottie Byram

[Dingman-Lamone Center for Entrepreneurship](#)

Coach

Molly Cain

[Redhorse Corporation](#)

Coach

Valerie Chan

[Plat4orm](#)

Coach

Kyle Cox

[ATP Fund](#)

Coach

Michael Crider

[Crider Company](#)

Qualifier

Garrett Dailey

[Lucid](#)

Coach

Liz Deering

[Haven](#)

Coach

Matt DiPaola

[Fractional CMO](#)

Qualifier

Christine DiPietro

[Independent](#)

Qualifier

Candice Digby

[Armadillo World Headquarters](#)

Qualifier

Leslie Elder

[Nevoya](#)

Qualifier

Sloan Foster

[Sloan Seasonings](#)

Qualifier

Marlinda Galapon

[Marlinda Galapon](#)

Coach

Benjamin Glenn

[A Matter of Innovation](#)

Coach

Jonathan Ha

[AMD](#)

Coach

Tim Hines

[Marketing Starter Group](#)

Qualifier

Bull Holland

[Bull Holland](#)

Coach

Jack Hudson

[Tesla](#)

Qualifier

Lourdes Juan

[Knead Technologies](#)

Coach

Kaz Karwowski

[Rice University](#)

Coach

Teri Kelly

[Independent](#)

Qualifier

Katina Kenyon

[Applaudo](#)

Coach

Esmaeil Khakasani

Gramour

Qualifier

Rashmi Kilam

[Bouin Capital](#)

Coach

[Russell Kischuk](#)

Danger Close Advisory

Coach

Soo-Jin Lee

[Netflix](#)

Coach

Starr Long

[The Acceleration Agency](#)

Qualifier

Jonathan Lowenhar

[Enjoy The Work](#)

Coach

Amy MacDougall

[Boston Consulting Group](#)

Coach

Christopher MacPherson

[Lovelace AI](#)

Coach

Paulo Machado

[Health Innovation](#)

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Jake McKee

[Jake McKee Consulting](#)

Coach

Rob Austin McKee

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[Imagine Believe Realize, LLC](#)

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Mark Phillip

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Sajeev Prelis

[CyberGuard Advantage](#)

Coach

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[New Founder School](#)

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Russ Somers

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Mike Steely

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Donnie Stroud

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Jennifer Tacheff

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Coach

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