** Guidelines: Writing the Business Case **

Students participating in the 2013/14 SouthVenture Student Business Plan Competition are encouraged to submit their Business Cases in the format of their choice however it may be beneficial to follow the format described below. Business Cases submitted must not exceed the specified **3-page limit. Entries are to be sent to Steve Craig, Director – Student Professional Development / External Relations, Faculty of Management University of Lethbridge, E-mail:** **steve.craig@uleth.ca** **no later than Monday November 18, 2013.**

**Writing a Successful Business Case - Some Practical Hints**

Reviewers will accord the highest ratings to those Business Cases which are clearly written, provide a logical analysis of the opportunity, and a compelling story as to why the proposed venture will succeed.

The principal elements expected in the 3-page Business Proposal are:

**The "Pitch":**

A carefully written statement describing the single most essential idea you wish the reviewers to retain about your proposed venture. Consider the statement similar to that where you are verbally describing your proposal to someone in 30 seconds or less. Strive to make a lasting impression. This section should not exceed 100 words.

**Opportunity and Application:**

This section addresses the innovation that your team has conceived which underpins a potential commercial opportunity. Your description of the technology must be written in a fashion accessible to people not necessarily experts in the subject matter. It would be equally advantageous for your team to briefly describe how your innovation compares with competitive technologies and other advances in the field.

Does the innovation represent a truly breakthrough advance or is it an improvement over existing solutions? Student teams must ensure that they provide supporting evidence for their assertions.

After providing a general background on the innovation itself, teams must describe the specific application(s) which the technology may be translated into (i.e., product or service). Teams must also report on the overall technical feasibility of transforming the innovation into a commercial grade application.

**Market Overview:**

Teams must further inform the reviewers on the likeliest users of the commercial application of the product. One simple approach in considering the nature of potential customers is to determine what problems the proposed product or service address. Once identified, a brief description of the potential customers should be presented.

In addition to profiling the likeliest users, this section must summarize the unique value that the potential customers would obtain from the proposed commercial application of the technology.

**Validation and Execution:**

A great idea, a compelling opportunity and a well-considered market analysis is a good start but you need to further demonstrate to the reviewers your understanding of the business model and why investors should fund you. In this section, you should describe how you intend to finance your venture from your current stage to commercial launch. It is strongly recommended that you demonstrate that the level of upfront capital investment required will lead to desired results for your venture and the investors alike.

You must further demonstrate your ability to execute on your plan. Investors will be acutely aware of the risks in financing early-stage ventures. Describing important development milestones will reveal both your market and technical assumptions -- clear indicators of the risks investors need to know.