# HOW TO WIN:

## The Founder's Guide to the Competition

### From the New Ventures BC Team

Entering the New Ventures BC Competition is a journey toward commercializing your innovation. While every venture is unique—from SaaS to R&D-heavy life sciences—the winners share a specific mindset: they build a business, not just a product.

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### 1. Traction is Your Best Narrative

Proof of market is the loudest thing in the room. Whether you are scaling or just starting, you must prove people want what you're building.

- **If you have revenue:** Show the path to $1M and beyond. Is it repeatable? Is it scalable?
- **If you are pre-revenue:** Don't panic, but do provide **evidence**. Use Letters of Intent (LOIs), pilot project results, beta user feedback, deep industry expertise, or solid customer discovery intelligence backed by research.
- **The Goal:** Make it feel "inevitable" that customers will pay you.

**Pro-Tip: Commercial > Technical:**
A common pitfall is over-explaining the science while ignoring the business. Often, the best communicated and marketed solution wins, not necessarily the most technically complex one. Convince judges that your company is a vehicle for growth.

### 2. Don't Be a Lone Wolf: Use the Resources

Our data shows a clear trend: companies that actively engage with the NVBC ecosystem have a significantly higher success rate. Many participants find these resources to be the most valuable part of the entire competition.

- **The Top 25 Advantage:** If you advance to the **Top 25**, our Mentor Wrangler will hand-pick and assign expert volunteers to your venture—individuals with a rich history in your industry and/or in scaling tech. Taking these sessions seriously is your "inside track" to a winning pitch.
- **Broad Engagement:** Beyond individual mentors, use the startup seminars, in-person feedback events, and workshops. These are designed to help your business case before it reaches the final jury.

- **Be Open-Minded:** Success depends on your willingness to receive input. The best founders are those who can take high-level feedback and iterate. Being open to external expertise is a signal of a mature, investable leader.
Note that being open-minded doesn't mean you have to take all advice - 100 different advisors might have 100 different opinions. Try to explore the 'why' behind an opinion; what can you learn from it, even if you don't agree? How to apply it to your business?

## 3. Think Like a Judge

To win, it helps to step out of the "Builder" role and into the "Investor" role, which is the predominant hat a judge will put on when reviewing your submission (even if you are currently not fundraising). When a judge reviews your submission, they are evaluating your likelihood of success. When an investor reviews your pitch, they are similarly evaluating how likely it is you can 10x their investment in a reasonable timeframe (this differs per industry).

- **The Viewpoint:** Ask yourself: *"How would a judge looking at my score sheet, and an investor looking at their wallet, view this answer?"* Or more general: *"If an investor had to invest 100k in a startup with the goal to get the best return, why should they give it to you?"*

**Pro-Tip: The "Simple" Test**

If a judge has to read your executive summary twice to understand what you sell, you've already lost them. In this day and age we are in an attention economy: if your hook or pitch requires less thinking to grab someone's attention, you're likely going to gather more attention from more people, more easily. Use clear, jargon-free language to maximize this.

**Try this:** Put a (sanitized) version of your pitch into an AI tool and ask it to **"Explain like I'm 12 (ELI12)."** Does that (simple) output help you refine your own value proposition into something easier to understand, making it more effective at grabbing attention from busy people with limited attention spans?

| Pitch Type | Example |
|---|---|
| **Jargon-Heavy** | Our proprietary architecture leverages decentralized heuristic neural lattices and multi-modal transformer pipelines to facilitate real-time edge-case optimization for hyper-localized data siloing. We are vertically integrating a zero-trust API ecosystem that synthesizes unstructured telemetry into actionable, high-fidelity predictive paradigms for the enterprise-scale IoT vertical. |
| **ELI12 (Simple)** | We built an AI that finds and fixes technical glitches in smart factories before they cause a shutdown. It's like a "Check Engine" light for a whole assembly line, saving manufacturers millions in lost productivity. |