



LAUNCH PAD – A COMPETITION

OVERVIEW:

Mess Hall is a unique culinary incubator located in the Brookland neighborhood of Washington, DC. We support independent food entrepreneurs in a brand new facility designed to foster growth through a Membership model, while creating a vibrant and diverse local food community.

Mess Hall provides exclusive resources, support and innovative programs to help pave a path to success for our Members. The Launch Pad Contest (the Contest) is just one way we are identifying promising food entrepreneurs; connecting them with real opportunities that will help them thrive in the marketplace; and providing commercial kitchens that accommodate diverse production needs.

PRIZES:

The Winner will receive the following. See more details in [Prize Terms](#) below.

- Grand Prize: Investment from the [EquityEats](#) CEO, and a \$500,000 investment opportunity through EquityEats, a new DC-based equity crowdfunding platform for food and beverage businesses, to open your brick-and-mortar concept. EquityEats will provide additional guidance to attract investors in opening his or her DC-based concept.
- A free 6-month “Unlimited” [Mess Hall](#) membership with 24-7 access PLUS the ability to host two events in Mess Hall’s Demonstration Kitchen & adjacent Event Space.
- Six-month Mentorship from Founder of [operation:eatery](#), Rebecca Layton Gunter
- An exclusive branding/marketing consultation from Co-Founder/CEO of [DC Brau](#), Brandan Skall
- An exclusive distribution channel consultation from President of [Route 11 Potato Chips](#), Sarah Cohen
- Feature in [Edible DC’s](#) November Print Issue
- Feature in the *Industree Skinee* newsletter provided by [Industree](#)
- Tax Consultation or review of previous year’s Tax Return provided by [Calibre CPA Group](#)
- Production shoot with 2 person crew edited into a 2-3 minute promotional video by [Digital Video Labs](#)
- Your choice of graphic, branding, or web design services provided by [Friendly Design](#)
- Feature in the *Industree Skinee* newsletter provided by [Industree](#)

WHO:

Budding Food Entrepreneurs will compete for the opportunity to launch their own culinary business. This Competition is open to Startups / New Businesses only. See Eligibility section below to see if you qualify.

WHAT:

A business plan competition will narrow Applicants (also referred to as “Contestants”) to four Finalists who will pitch their concept to a panel of local industry experts during a live finale. Successful proposals will embody a commercially viable product and/or service; intelligent marketing and operational plans; and an emphasis on local food-sourcing and sustainable practices.

WHEN & WHERE:

Competition will kick off in July and conclude on September 27, 2014. See “Important Dates” below.

Finale to be held at Mess Hall – 703 Edgewood Street, NE, and attended by Contestants, industry leaders, and press.

WHY:

To encourage entrepreneurship within the food community and enable the launch of a business that might not otherwise come to fruition.

The Contest will be conducted in three steps as follows:

STEP 1. REGISTER AND SUBMIT AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Application is hosted online at <http://www.messhalldc.com/launchpad/>

YOU MUST REGISTER BY 11:59 PM ON AUGUST 11, 2014.
LATE REGISTRATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!

Instructions:

- Go to <http://www.messhalldc.com/launchpad/>
- Click "Register to Compete"
- Complete the form with your basic information.
- Upload an Executive Summary of your business plan. This summary may not exceed two pages single-spaced and must use the Arial 12 font with one-inch margins. MS Word format or PDF is required.
- To complete your registration you will be prompted to pay a \$50 Registration Fee. Note: this fee will not be refunded for any reason.

For templates and tips on writing business plans, see **SCORE** and research information such as **Business Plans for Small Business Owners.**

STEP 2. WRITTEN BUSINESS PLAN

FINAL DUE DATE: 11:59 PM ON AUGUST 25, 2014

LATE ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES! IT IS WISE TO SUBMIT EARLY!

To submit: You must email your Business Plan to LaunchPad@MESSHALLDC.com

Written business plans may not exceed 15 pages single-spaced plus up to 5 pages of appendices. The cover page and table of contents page (since they are not numbered) do not count toward the 15-page limit. Plans must use the Arial 12 font with one-inch margins; however, charts and footnotes may use the Arial 10 font. Word or PDF is required. The document name must be the same as the name of the business (businessname.doc or businessname.docx or businessname.pdf). **Submissions that do not comply with these specifications will be rejected.**

Each business plan should include the following sections:

- Executive Summary (including Mission Statement and Personal statement)
- Company Overview - Products & Services (and packaging if applicable)
- Competitor Analysis & Business Strategy
- Marketing Plan
- Operations Plan
- Management Team with Bios & Company Structure
- Financial Projections (including, at a minimum: capital required, 3 years of income statement forecasts)

This is a competitive process and the Contest Organizers are expecting top-notch applications. Business plans will be evaluated and scored by industry experts. Scores will be tabulated by Calibre CPA Group, an independent firm.

The four Applicants with the highest scores ("Finalists") will notified the week of September 1, 2014 and will advance to the Grand Finale: an Oral Business Plan Presentation. The Grand Finale will be held at Mess Hall on September 27, 2014 at 5pm.

Applicants* that did not receive the top four highest scores will receive two Invitations to the Exclusive September 27th Finale & After-Party with top industry professionals, key sponsors, and fellow food entrepreneurs. This is a unique opportunity to pitch, sell, and collaborate with other food-related industry folks. All Applicants are encouraged to attend.

*In the event the Contest receives more than 54 entries, Participants with the top four scores will advance to the Finale, and the Applicants with the next 50-best scores will receive two tickets to the Finale & After-Party. Tickets are non-transferrable.

WRITTEN BUSINESS PLAN JUDGING CRITERIA

Executive Summary (including Mission Statement and Personal Statement) - 20%

Viability of Business - 20%

Competitor Analysis & Business Strategy - 15%

Marketing Plan - 10%

Operations Plan - 10%

Management Team & Company Structure - 10%

Financial Projections - 10%

Local / Sustainable Component - 5%

STEP 3. GRAND FINALE: ORAL BUSINESS PLAN PRESENTATION

SEPTEMBER 27, 2014 - 5:00PM

LIVE AT MESS HALL - 703 EDGEWOOD STREET, NW WASHINGTON DC

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: SUSAN ABLE, PUBLISHER EDIBLE DC

Only the four Contestants that have been designated as the Finalists in the Launch Pad Competition will compete in this round in front of a live audience.

The time limit for oral presentations is 15 minutes. Given the time constraints Contestants are highly encouraged NOT to provide a cooking demonstration unless it is absolutely integral to the concept.

Oral presentations may be accompanied by PowerPoint slides (other formats may be permitted, but must be pre-approved a minimum of two weeks prior to Finale to ensure compatibility with available Audio/Visual resources). A warning will be given when three minutes remain. Judges will have approximately five minutes for questions and answers. Judges may elect to spend more time for Q&A at their sole discretion.

All team members of the final Contestants must participate significantly in their team's oral presentation, while non-team members may not participate. However, individuals' presentation times need not be equal.

Product Samples must be provided for all Judges and audience members to taste. Taste is a critical component of this contest. Contestants can utilize Mess Hall's kitchens to prepare the samples as needed. Please provide requirements at least one week prior to finale.

Following the presentations, Finalists and the audience (composed of Applicants, Judges and Sponsors) will adjourn to a celebratory reception within Mess Hall. The results will be tabulated and verified by Calibre CPA Group, an independent accounting firm. The winner will be announced during the reception and prizes will be presented (see Prizes). All decisions by the panel of judges are final.

JUDGE'S PANEL AT FINALE

Brandan Skall – Co-founder and CEO of [DC Brau](#)

Alisia Kleinmann – Founder of [Industree](#)

Joe Clarke – Senior Vice President, Retail Banking Manager at [EagleBank](#)

Johann Moonesinghe – Co-Founder and CEO of [EquityEats](#)

One additional Judge TBA

Audience Vote – Each member of the Live Audience will receive a single vote. The Audience vote will count as 5% of the overall vote.

ORAL BUSINESS PLAN PRESENTATION JUDGING CRITERIA

Branding Impact, Company Story and Continuity - 20%

Market Opportunity/Statement of Need - 15%

Pertinent Experience / Management Capability -10%

Operational Capability / Overall Concept Viability - 10%

Financial Understanding - 10%

Taste of Product - 10%

Product Packaging / Food Presentation - 10%

Value Proposition - 5%

Sustainability Component – 5%

Quality of Visual Aids - 5%

CONTEST RULES – TERMS & CONDITIONS

Please read carefully, by submitting your application, each Applicant hereby agrees to be subject to the following Contest Rules:

1. ENTRY:

No purchase necessary to enter or win. Contestants will enter by registering at www.messhalldc.com/launchpad/ and paying the \$50.00 registration fee (non-refundable). Registration closes August 11, 2014 at 11:59 PM EST.

All Contestants must then submit their Business Plan via email to LaunchPad@MESSHALLDC.com on or before August 25, 2014 at 11:59 PM EST.

Each submission must include the information required within this Document. (Failure to do so will result in delaying the processing of your application and/or may result in eliminating you from further consideration). Late registrations and submissions will not be scored.

2. ELIGIBILITY:

The Launch Pad Competition is designed for new “For Profit” businesses in the food and beverage arena. The business must not be more than one year old (as of July 1, 2014) and must have gross sales of less than \$10,000 year to date (Jan 1 – July 1, 2014). New businesses that have not yet been formed are welcome to apply. An existing business that has been completely inactive for at least 12 months (as of July 1, 2014) may also apply.

The Competition is open to businesses that are represented by an individual or team of up to four people. Applicant must provide a completed business plan that details a workable concept and intends to open this business.

Businesses must be formed as a Corporation or LLC in DC, MD, or VA. Some preference will be given to businesses formed in the District of Columbia and/or DC Residents. New businesses that have not yet been formed are most welcome to apply but must be formed prior to collection of any Prizes. Only one entry may be submitted per business.

The Competition is open only to legal U.S. Residents, ages 21 and over. Applicants must be in good mental and physical health. Void where prohibited by law. Businesses that incorporate any illegal activity and/or gambling will not be considered. Any disputes arising under the terms and conditions of this contest will be governed by the laws of the District of Columbia.

3. AVAILABILITY:

If selected, applicants will be required to attend and participate in events, rehearsals and/or meetings affiliated with the Launch Pad Competition, including, without limitation, the following (dates subject to change): (a) Grand Finale on September 27, 2014 (see details below); (b) interviews and press conferences upon request, (c) a contestant-hosted chef night in the Demonstration Kitchen.

4. SPONSORS:

Sponsors of The Launch Pad Contest may request certain basic information about contestants. Mess Hall may elect to release Basic Information including the Executive Summary to select trusted Sponsors at its sole discretion.

5. WINNER SELECTION:

Mess Hall and certain industry professionals will judge the contest. Contestants will be judged based the following, but not limited to: the thoroughness of each application, professional experience, culinary skills, business acumen, the potential to run a successful culinary business. See [Judging Criteria](#) for details. All decisions of the judges are final.

6. PRIZES:

Prizes are non-transferable. No cash alternative to any prizes will be offered. Prizes are conditional upon the Terms and Conditions of the Launch Pad Contest and are subject to change without notice.

Mess Hall or its agent(s) will provide instruction on how to collect all prizes. It is the sole responsibility of the winning Applicant(s) ("Winner") to coordinate collection of Prizes from Event Sponsors. In the event that a Prize becomes unavailable, Mess Hall or the Event Sponsors will make an effort to substitute a prize of equal value, but will not be held responsible if Prize(s) cannot be fulfilled. Any tax obligations are the responsibility of the Winner.

Prior to collecting any Prizes, Applicants must show proof of:

- Registration as a legal entity in DC, MD or VA.
- Insurance Coverage \$1,000,000 / \$2,000,000 and list Mess Hall as Additionally Insured.
- Food Handler's License in the District of Columbia

EQUITYEATS helps passionate food entrepreneurs find funding for their brick-and-mortar concepts from local investors who receive equity in the company as well as perks (such as discounts and bar tabs). EquityEats will provide the winner the ability to raise capital from investors in the local community through its online equity crowdfunding platform (the "Equity Raise"). EquityEats will waive the initial posting fee other entrepreneurs are required to pay for hosting a campaign on its website. A successful raise is not guaranteed through EquityEats, but the winner will receive guidance from EquityEats about how to market his/her concept on the platform and how to run a successful crowdfunding campaign. The winner must conduct the Equity Raise after January 1, 2015 and before December 31, 2015.

The Equity Raise will be governed by EquityEats' Terms of Raising. Failure to adhere to the Terms of Raising will result in the revocation of this prize. The winner will set up a new LLC to raise money if EquityEats deems this necessary. The winner also agrees to revise his/her business plan as deemed necessary by EquityEats in order to comply with the EquityEats business plan model (requiring, amongst other things, a 20% built-out contingency fund and working capital for at least three months of operation).

EquityEats helps raise capital for brick-and-mortar storefronts for bars, restaurants and other food and beverage businesses. EquityEats reserves the right not to provide its services to businesses that do not fit within this model.

Depending on the legal and regulatory conditions at the time of the Equity Raise, it might not be possible for the EquityEats CEO to invest. In this event, the EquityEats CEO will secure equivalent funding from other sources.

MESS HALL - The Winner will receive a standard 6-month "Unlimited Membership" Mess Hall DC ("Membership"). Membership includes access to 3 Membership Kitchens; 1 reserved dry storage shelf; 1 reserved equipment shelf; 1 reserved refrigerator or freezer shelf; nomad office access; 1 assigned personal locker; secure key fob access; unlimited access to Membership Socials; and the ability to work in teams of 3. Winner will also have access to Mess Hall's Event Space and Demonstration kitchen for two Dates. Based on availability, some restrictions may apply.

After the initial 6 months, the Membership may be renewed at the then current market rate. Throughout the term of the Membership, the Winner may elect to rent additional storage space and/or other a la carte amenities at Winner's sole expense. Membership may commence as early as October 1, 2014, but no later than April 1, 2015. The Membership will be documented via Mess Hall DC's standard Membership Agreement and is subject to those terms. Prior to Membership commencement, the Winner may be required to provide a refundable \$500 Security Deposit guaranteeing the obligations of the Membership and held for the entire Membership Term. Violation of the Membership Terms may result in the revocation of Membership and the surrender of any Prizes not yet collected.

OPERATION:EATERY - Prizes:

- Six (6) 90-minute face-to-face business coaching strategy sessions
- Connections to key resources and people
- Focus group for product evaluation & primary market research
- Copyright free media content & images for promotional use
- Opportunity matchmaking
- Brand evangelism

The winner will receive an 6-month contract of free technical assistance with operation:eatery. After the initial 6 months, the client may choose to extend the service contract for payment of base fee and operating expenses. Basic plans will start at \$199 per month. The Statement of Work (SOW) will commence on or before October 1, 2014 and include the option of providing the winner with additional services. Within thirty (30) days of being announced as the winner, the winning applicant will be required to execute and return the SOW. All prizes will be subject to full compliance with the terms of the SOW. No cash alternative to this prize will be offered. This prize is not transferrable. The cash value of this prize is \$6600.

DC BRAU - Winner will coordinate directly with DC Brau to coordinate a mutual time.

ROUTE 11 POTATO CHIPS - Winner will coordinate directly with Route 11 to coordinate a mutual time to meet with Sarah Cohen.

EDIBLE DC - Winner will coordinate directly with Edible DC to coordinate a mutual time for any interview(s) and/or photographs.

CALIBRE CPA GROUP, PLLC - Is pleased to offer 1 two-hour accounting and/or tax consultation session. Visit www.calibrecpa.com for the many services provided. Must schedule at least two weeks in advance.

DIGITAL VIDEO LABS Production shoot with 2 person crew edited into a 2-3 minute promotional video. Winner will coordinate directly with Digital Video Labs to coordinate a mutual time for shoot.

FRIENDLY DESIGN - Design consultation and services to meet winner's specific needs up to 10 hours as needed, \$1,450 value.

INDUSTREE - Winner must coordinate directly with Industree to coordinate a mutual time for any interview(s) and/or photographs.

7. LICENSE GRANTED:

Applicant hereby grants Mess Hall DC a non-exclusive right to broadcast, store, reproduce, distribute, syndicate, and otherwise use exhibit the applicant's submission (along with their names, voices, performance and/or likeness) in all media now known or later coming into being for purposes of trade or advertising without further compensation.

Applicant warrants and represents that he/she has full legal right, power and authority to grant Mess Hall the foregoing license and, if applicable, has secured all necessary rights from any participants in, and contributors to, his/her submission to grant such license.

8. RETURN OF SUBMISSION:

Mess Hall DC shall be under an obligation to use any submission or return any submission to any applicant.

9. USE OF CONTEST INFORMATION: All entries become the property of Mess Hall DC who reserves the right to use any and all information related to the Launch Pad competition, including submissions provided by contestants, for editorial, marketing or any other purpose, unless prohibited by law.

10. CONDUCT AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

All contest participants agree to be bound by these Contest Rules. Mess Hall DC, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to disqualify any person it finds to be tampering with the entry process, the operation of its web site or is otherwise in violation of these rules. Contestant hereby represents and warrants that all the information provided in his/her application is true and accurate, and any false or misleading information submitted herein is grounds for my immediate elimination from consideration. By submitting their application, each contestant hereby acknowledges that he/she has read and understands the Contest Rules and can fulfill the eligibility requirements and all the information provided is true and accurate, and any false or misleading information submitted herein is grounds for his/her immediate elimination from consideration.

11. LIMITATIONS OF LIABILITY:

Mess Hall shall not be liable for late, lost or misdirected e-mail or for any computer, online, telephone or technical malfunctions that may occur. If, for any reason, including without limitation, act of God or civil disturbance, the Launch Pad competition is not capable of running as planned, Mess Hall DC may cancel, terminate, modify or suspend the contest. Contest participants hereby agree to release Mess Hall DC from any liability resulting from, or related to, participation in the contest.

12. RELEASE:

By participating in the Launch Pad Competition, contestants agree to be bound by these Contest Rules and the decisions of the judges, which shall be final in all respects. In addition to the foregoing, by participating in this Launch Pad Competition, contestants agree to release Mess Hall, including its parents, subsidiaries, affiliated and successor entities, advertising and promotion agencies, sponsors, advisors, and each of their respective officers, directors, agents, representatives and employees, as well as each of their respective successor, representatives and assigns (collectively "Released Parties") from any and all actions, claims, injury, loss or damage arising in any manner, directly or indirectly, from participating in the Launch Pad Competition and/or acceptance or use of the prize.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY GUIDELINES:

The authors of the business plan will retain all rights to the plan regarding its use at all times prior to and following the competition except as stated below. Due to the nature of the competition, Mess Hall will not ask judges, reviewers, staff or the audience to agree to or sign non-disclosure statements for any participant.

As all oral presentations and question/answer sessions are open to a live audience, the Finale may be photographed, videoed, and/or broadcast to interested persons through media which may include radio, television and the Internet. Any data or information discussed or divulged in public sessions by entrants should be considered information that will likely enter the public realm, and entrants should not assume any right of confidentiality in any data or information discussed, divulged or presented in these sessions.

14. FOOD DAY:

Selected contestants may be asked to participate in [Food Day 2014](#) on a volunteer basis. Mess Hall will be offering cooking and nutrition demonstrations for children on October 24th and will need volunteer support.

KEY DATES

JULY 25, 2014

Registration Opens. Visit <http://www.messhalldc.com/launchpad/> and click "Register Now to Compete"

AUGUST 11, 2014, 11:59PM

Registration deadline. Contestants must complete all of the following in order to participate:

- Visit <http://www.messhalldc.com/launchpad/> and click "Register Now to Compete"
- Enter basic business information
- Upload Executive Summary
- Pay \$50 Entry fee via paypal when prompted on the Registration Form

AUGUST 25, 2014, 11:59PM

Deadline for complete Business Plan Submission

Judging begins. In-person interviews may occur if necessary.

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2014

Finalists Announced.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2014

Finalists will present at the Grand Finale to be held at Mess Hall's Demonstration Kitchen and attended by industry leaders and members of the press. A party will follow to celebrate the winner and the spirit of the competition which is to connect food entrepreneurs with people that can help small businesses grow.

SPONSORS

DIAMOND SPONSORS



GOLD SPONSORS



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COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

operation:eatery

