hackathon participant bible

everything you need. nothing you don't. read this before you show up.

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1. TL;DR

- **When**: 2 days (31.1 – 1.2)
- **Where:** Jungiusstraße 6, 20355 Hamburg
- **Communication:** [Discord](#)
- **Teams**: 1–5 people. Group work is highly encouraged.
- **Deadline**: 14:00 Day 2. No exceptions (Recommended to stop development by 13:00).
- **What you submit**: working demo + 2-min video + GitHub repo + pitch deck.
- **Questions?** Post in Discord [#faq](#).

2. Rules

This hackathon is about building and shipping during the weekend.

OK to Bring

- **Ideas, notes, sketches, research** — come prepared with your concept and planning materials
- **Generic starter templates** — boilerplate you reuse for any project (not project-specific)
- **Third-party tools, open source, sponsor tech** — use any tools and libraries (respect licenses)

Not OK

- **A mostly finished product** — no bringing pre-built projects and "just polishing" on-site
- **Project-specific pre-built code** — features built before the hackathon that make up your submission's core

What We Judge

We judge what you build at the hackathon. Projects that are largely pre-built may be penalized in scoring or removed from awards.

Best Practices

- **Commit early, commit often** — use git throughout the weekend, create your repo at kickoff
- **Ship a working demo slice early** — get something functional first, then improve. Stability wins.

Integrity Checks

We run automated checks across all submissions to ensure fair play.

- **AI-powered analysis** — an AI agent built for this hackathon analyzes code patterns and commit histories
- **Fair process** — flagged projects receive a quick, friendly clarification chat. We're here to celebrate builders.

Teams

- 1–5 people per team
- Recommended: 3 — enough to divide work, small enough to move fast

3. Before You Show Up

This is an AI hackathon. Your secret weapon isn't just code — it's knowing how to work *with* AI. Here's how to prepare based on your experience level.

Devs

You know the drill. Bring your favorite coding agent, pick an idea, ship it. No prep required.

New to Coding?

AI coding tools have changed the game. Tools like [Cursor](#), [Antigravity](#), [Manus](#), and [Codex](#) mean that everyone can work with code.

Your one task before the event: Pick an AI coding agent and start playing with it.

Ask your AI agent: *"What do I need to know and set up before the upcoming AI Hackathon?"* — then follow its guidance. Let it guide you and teach you the basics. That's exactly how you'll work during the hackathon.

Bonus round: If you have time, try deploying a simple "Hello World" project to see the full process end-to-end. Platforms like [Firebase](#) and [Vercel](#) make this surprisingly easy. Ask your AI agent to walk you through it.

The more comfortable you are with your AI tools before the event, the faster you'll move when it counts.

Want to go deeper?

- [Addy Osmani's AI coding workflow](#) — how experienced devs work with AI
- [Cursor: Agent Best Practices](#) — official guide from Cursor

4. Team Formation

At the event you'll need to do the following things to form a team. We highly encourage you to form a team!

Step 0: Sign up on the [Hackathon Page](#)

Everyone in the team needs to sign up on that page to participate in the hackathon.

Step 1: Find a Team

First you need to find a team. You can do this in advance or at the event. There **won't** be a lot of time at the event itself.

Step 2: Decide on a Team Lead

The team lead is an administrative role - their purpose is to register the team and to submit the project at the end of the hackathon. Once you've decided on a team lead they need to **create your team** on the [Hackathon Page](#).

Step 3: Join the Team Officially

After your team lead created your team you'll need to join it. You need to do this to claim the perks and be able to win the prices.

Step 4: Claim Perks

Once everyone joins the team and you lock it, your team lead can activate the perks. Let's go!

5. Two-Day Battle Plan

Here is a blueprint for the pace you need to have to finish in time.

Phase Timeline

DAY 1

Milestone	Timeline	Description
Idea	11:30 to 13:00	Decide what you're building
Setup	13:00 to 14:00	Repo, starter template, API keys
MVP	End of day	One core feature working end-to-end

DAY 2

Milestone	Timeline	Description
V1	12:00	Stop building, start preparing submission
Demo	12:00 to 13:30	Record video, write pitch, practice
SUBMIT THE DAM THING	13:30	Hard deadline at 14:00, no exceptions

6. Submission Guide

Required Accounts

Create these before the event:

1. **GitHub** — source code submission ([use this repo template](#))
2. **YouTube** — video demo upload

What You Submit

Submit at [ai-beavers.com/hackathon/perks](#) (submit tab):

- 2-minute video (YouTube or other service link)
- Source code on GitHub (repo)
- Pitch deck (url)
- Working demo (url) - optional but encouraged

Important: all of them have to be publicly accessible when submitting.

Pitch deck

What to Put in Your Slides (max 5)

Goal: Prove this could become a real business.

this is for inspiration only, you could structure your slides as you wish. just remember, if you get to the finals you will have 2 mins to do the pitch, 2 mins for your demo and 2 mins for Q&A.

Slide 1: The Market Problem

- who has this problem? (be specific: "B2B sales teams," not "businesses")
- how big is this market? (# of companies, users, spend)
- how do they solve it today and why does that suck?

(Investors fund markets, not features.)

Slide 2: Your Solution

- what you built in one sentence
- why is your approach 10x better than alternatives?

(Keep it short. Just enough to understand what it does.)

Slide 3: Business Model

- who pays?
- how much would they pay?
- what's the unit economics? (e.g., $50/mo subscription, costs $5 to serve)

(Show you've thought about how money works.)

Slide 4: Go-to-Market Plan

- how would you get your first 10 customers? (be specific: "DM 50 founders in YC W25 batch")
- what's your distribution advantage? (existing audience? community? partner?)

what would make someone switch from their current solution? (This is the hardest part. Show you have a real plan, not "post on social media.")

Slide 5: Why You / Why Now

- why are you the right team to build this?
- what did you learn in 48 hours that makes you more confident?
- would you work on this full-time if it got traction?

(Judges invest in founders who won't quit.)

How You're Evaluated

We judge your project like investors judge a startup: not just "does it work?" but "could this fly?" Ship something real. The further you get on the startup journey during the hackathon, the more points you earn.

Weight	Category	What We Look For
25%	**Product Viability & Market Potential**	Could this become a real product or company? Clear problem for real users?
25%	**Technical Innovation & AI Implementation**	Creative use of AI? Strong sponsor tool integration? Novel approach?
20%	**Execution & Working Demo**	Does it actually work? How complete? Stable during the demo?
15%	**User Experience & Design**	Intuitive interface? Good user flow? Visually polished?

Weight	Category	What We Look For
15%	**Presentation**	Clear problem story? Engaging video? Well-structured pitch?

Video Demo

You have max **2-minutes** for your demo. Here is a **suggestion** on how to structure it.

Segment	Time	Focus
Problem	~15s	What sucks? Who has this problem?
Live Demo	~80s	Show the product working. Click through the flow.
Why It Matters	~15s	Impact, market, why now.
Vision	~10s	Where does this go if you keep building?

Resources

- [Michael Seibel: How to Pitch Your Company](#) — the essential 5-minute read
- [YC: Guide to Demo Day Pitches](#)
- [Cap](#) — free, open-source screen recording
- [Quickrecorder](#) (for mac)

7. Sponsor Tools & Credits

You are not limited to these tools — you can use any tools, libraries, frameworks, or APIs you want.

Some prizes are awarded in sponsor tracks. If you want to be eligible for a sponsor track (e.g., ElevenLabs, n8n, etc.), your project should clearly use that sponsor's tool in the product and/or demo.

Important: Access/claim instructions will be shared separately in Discord and during the event.

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Team collaboration & planning

Miro A visual collaboration board for teams to brainstorm ideas, map user flows, sketch quick diagrams, and keep everyone aligned while you build. Useful for early ideation and for making your demo story clear. Learn more: miro.com

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Design & UI prototyping

v0 A tool for generating and iterating on web app UI quickly from prompts, helping teams move from idea to a usable interface fast. Learn more: [v0.app](v0.app)

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Building (coding / IDE)

Cursor An AI-powered code editor that helps you write and edit code faster (generate code from instructions, refactor, debug, and iterate quickly). Learn more: cursor.com

Antigravity An AI-assisted development environment that uses agents to help you build software as part of your coding workflow. Learn more: antigravity.google

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AI model APIs (core product intelligence)

Google Gemini API An API for adding AI capabilities to your app (like understanding, writing, and multimodal features depending on the model). Learn more: ai.google.dev/gemini-api/docs

OpenAI API An API for adding AI features such as chat, text generation, and structured outputs (capabilities depend on the model you choose). Learn more: platform.openai.com/docs

MiniMax API An API platform with different AI capabilities depending on the model/endpoint (commonly used for text and other modalities). Learn more: platform.minimax.io/docs

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Automation & "make it do stuff"

n8n A workflow automation tool that connects apps and services, so you can build flows like "when X happens → do Y → notify Z" without wiring everything manually. Learn more: n8n.io

LangChain A toolkit for building AI apps that run multi-step workflows, connect models to tools/data, and implement patterns like retrieval (RAG). Learn more: langchain.com

Manus An AI agent designed to carry out tasks end-to-end (not only chat), which can be useful when you want the system to complete a long workflow and return a result. Learn more: manus.im

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Voice & audio

ElevenLabs Tools and APIs for generating voice/audio (for example, turning text into speech and building voice experiences). Learn more: elevenlabs.io

Hume Tools and APIs for building voice experiences, including real-time voice interfaces described in their developer docs. Learn more: hume.ai

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Media generation (video gen/creative assets / demo polish)

Runway Tools and APIs for generative media (commonly used as a video generation capability of a product and/or for creating video or visual assets to support a product demo). Learn more: runwayml.com

8. Quick Reference Card

Key Timeline

Day 1 (Saturday)	Time
Check-in + Breakfast	09:00
Introduction	10:30
Build starts	11:30
Lunch	13:00
Dinner	18:00
Venue closes	23:00

Day 2 (Sunday)	Time
Doors open + Breakfast	09:00
Lunch	13:00

Day 2 (Sunday)	Time
Submission deadline	**14:00**
Finals	17:20
End of event	19:30

Live Pitch Format: 2 min pitch + 2 min demo + 2 min Q&A

Event Info

Item	Details
Location	Jungiusstraße 6, 20355 Hamburg
WiFi	Name: BuceriusGuest Password: Bucerius
Discord	https://discord.gg/gRbh8h6A
Overnight info	No overnight access — venue closes 23:00 Day 1

now go build cool sh*t.