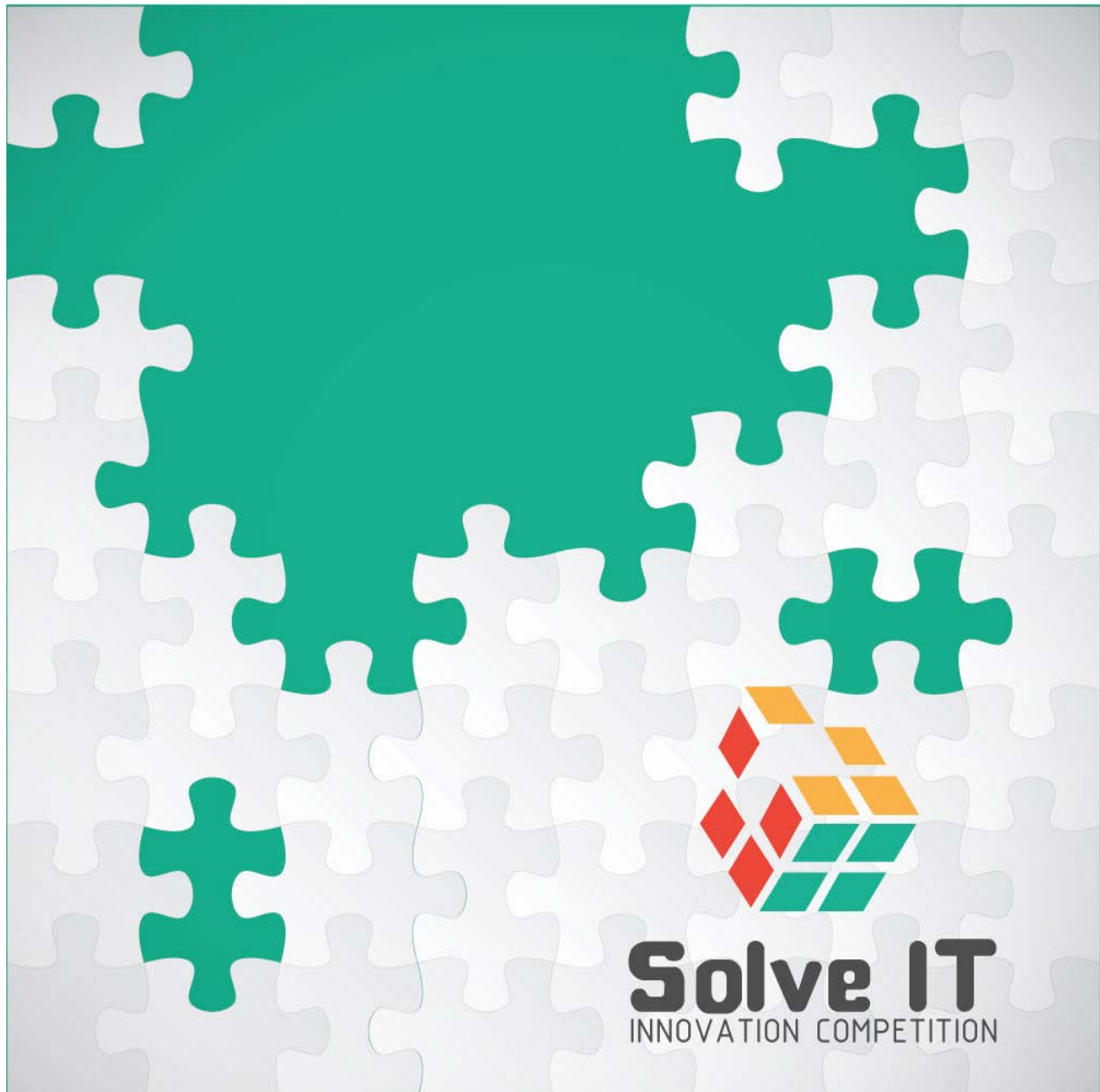# Solve IT Participant's Media Communication Code of Conduct

Solve IT

Introduction

Solve IT, as a national Incupetion (competition and incubation) project that helps to empower young innovators to solve their respective community problems via scalable and marketable tech products. However, the first step young tech innovators and entrepreneurs must solve is their communication; its nature and quality.

Communication in tech is not as simple as its definition. A huge range of things can affect the quality of your communication including language, emotions, the cultural situation, the medium used to communicate, target audience, and even your location. The complexity is why good communication skills are considered so desirable by investors and are keenly sought from Startups. Solve IT believes that accurate, effective and unambiguous communication is actually the key for success.

This document is the official Solve IT Media Communication Guideline, and all participants are expected to abide by it. The document contains useful general information that will serve as binding guidelines in your communication during and after your participation in Solve IT. In addition to general information, it also contains some dos and don'ts, pay special attention to those.

Know Solve IT by heart

Your first do is Know Solve IT and its partners! You must understand how Solve IT works, whom the project partners are. Make sure that you know who they are as the list is dynamic and can change during, and at the start of, every round. Luckily, you can access this information easily. Go to our website and take a look: icog-solveit.com

Solve IT can be summarised as a nationwide innovation competition and incubation that aims to, primarily, empower local innovators and help them launch their own tech start up, decentralize technology, and include the youth in problem-solving programs. Solve IT is also a marketplace where young innovators and investors connect through a yearlong Incupetion (incubation and competition) platform. Solve IT sparks and creates awareness about the impact of pro-poor technologies via direct seminars, media coverage, and target specific promotional campaigns. Solve IT also brings local investors, VCs, and other stockholders as potential investors of all participant's project after the completion of the round.

How to communicate as a Solve IT participant

You are part of the Solve IT family and you are going to align strongly with the Solve IT brand. Hence, we expect you to be:

> i) You are a tech innovator and we call you and your teammates along with your project "tech startups". Hence, when we refer and promote you as such, you should always mention your background and include Solve IT as your incubator.

> ii) You are a problem solver in your respective community as well in Ethiopia. When we help you be the problem solver, you are also our ambassador. So you are going to be an active promoter and lobbyist by spreading the word about Solve IT. Remember, you are what make Solve IT great and we will never stop promoting you proudly. In return, you should also promote Solve IT in every opportunity; the more Solve IT becomes successful the better for you to be accelerated and bring your product idea to market with us.

iii) Remember Solve IT is a nationwide project and without the help of its supporters and community, it cannot reach the entire nation. The more you spread the word about Solve IT, the better your brothers and sisters looking for such opportunity reach us. Again, remember, the more people are involved in the tech business, the better your chance to launch your business.

Guidelines for how to achieve these goals

1) You as a Solve IT Alumni
   a) When the opportunity comes, mention you are a Solve IT alumni. Share what the Solve IT program has meant for you in interviews, on social media, in conferences, in pitching demo sessions… etc.
   b) Mentioning Solve IT will make you more competent because Solve IT is your mark of quality and your brand stamp of approval! Remember the fact that you and your innovative idea were selected as one of the strongest among thousands of young innovators in Ethiopia.
   c) However, when you communicate your work, your own team/startup will always be the sender. You can never communicate on behalf of Solve IT, and you can never use the Solve IT logo without also using your own.

2) Solve IT and your brand
   a) Include Solve IT in your brochures, banners and other communication materials.
   b) Yet, do not distort or misuse our logo (Solve IT). The proportions, the colour, and the typography of our logo cannot be altered. Your mentor will provide you with our logo in various sizes for web or print publication and just ask so you shall receive.
   c) In addition, we have developed the "I solve my Community Problem" logo for our contestants. This logo can function as a mark of quality for you. Communicating that you are a problem solver via tech products is a simple and clear way of showing people that Solve IT supports your idea.

N.B Before displaying the Solve IT logo on any of your promotional and marketing materials and communication channels, remember to share it with us first to get our approval this includes your web site, your social media, your pitching deck, your promotional video, your printed flyers, banners, posters, etc.

3) Blogging is your best marketing
   a) Use our blog (iCog Labs website) and forum page (Solve IT Website) to communicate to different target groups. We will help you to post your articles and promotional pieces that will talk about your work and your impact.
   b) However, we encourage you to create your own blog as well. Blogging is considered as one of the most effective communication skill and Solve IT recommends six blogs on a monthly basis.

4) Social Media is a powerful tool
   a) Go viral on social media. This is your number one free tool, which will make your communication impactful attracting collaborators, investors and most importantly your

customers. First, if you do not create such outlets for your startup/project, you have to have one and create it today.

b) For those who have a professional business plan and prototype, Solve IT Recommends, at least, four social media accounts for your project; Facebook, Tweeter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Remember, these are just our recommendation and depending on your product and target audience, your number and choice of social media might vary. Most importantly, if you cannot develop a quality and engaging content, it is better to open only one account where you will at least post basic information about your product and startup/team.

c) Solve IT will post one original post about your project (if provided) via its social media outlets and repost (share, re-tweet etc.) two of your posts every week. Although there is no clear science about the number of posts (which also vary depending on the type of social media you are using), Solve IT recommends one post every day on each of your social media outlets.

d) Every time you post about your project we recommend that you tag the Solve IT pages on that specific social media outlet. This way our followers will see your posts and we would also be able to see your posts and share them.

5) Make the best out of other channels.
Remember, you are not limited to yours and ours media outlets and events, if used wisely, third party's social media outlets and events are a great springboard. Contribute articles and contents to famous blogs. Comment sections can be used as a way to mention something about your project but make sure that you are not spamming or even appear as a spammer, if you fail to do so, you will lose everything and get discredited and even banned. Public Tech Talks, Conferences, Workshops, and Events related with tech are another platform where you can mingle and then talk about your project.

6) You need a strategy
a) No matter what, you need a communication and marketing strategy! Yes, you are expected, actually you must, write your own media strategy. Define your target audience so you can quantify your stakeholder engagement.
b) Identify the best communication channels to use in accord with your audience and nature of project. Identify the types of content (video, pictograph, writings, etc.), how frequent and via which medium you will spread these in order for you to get your voice heard. As always, if you share this, your mentor will help you to refine it.

7) Live the Standard you pitch.
The best method to win the hearts of investors, customers, and other stakeholders is by living up to the values and promises you make. Remember that, your marketing efforts, such as marketing collaterals, logo, blog, social media outlet, website, and pitching event need to be strongly supported by the behaviour and reputation you create for yourself as a tech startup. No amount of marketing can change a bad reputation, so make sure you work on living up to the promises you make!

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood Solve IT Participant's Media Communication Code of Conduct. I also give my consent that this document can be stored in Solve IT's archives!

Name:_____

Signature:_____

City:_____

Date:_____