**INVESTOR REPORT: PRODUCT NAME and LOGO**

[insert graphic or photo of product]

Presented to: Audience’s Company or Name of Department

Presented by: Your Company Name or Department

Team Member Names

Date

**ABSTRACT**

This is a 2-3 sentence overview of the project: One sentence on background (why the project is necessary). One sentence on key activities in the project. One sentence that captures your thesis (WHO should do WHAT and WHY).

The Abstract is a stand-alone piece (no reference to figures or tables in the text) and appears at the bottom of the report title page.

**Writing Tips**

* Use Calibri for report heads and subheads.
	+ Use UC for **Main** heads, and U&LC for Subheads.
	+ Click on the sample for font sizes.
* Use 12 point Cambria for text.
	+ Line spacing for text: Use single spaced, as is common in professional reports.
	+ Indents: Use 5-space indents for all paragraphs in the document.
	+ Skip lines between paragraphs and subsections for easier reading.
	+ Margins: Use a ragged right margin to avoid white gaps in the text.
* Presented to: Use Name of Company if presenting to an external funder. Use Name of Department and Name of Business Unit or Company if presenting to an internal funder.
* List the team members’ names in alphabetical order by last name.

# **Executive Summary**

This is a one-page summary for management, investors and others who might not otherwise want to read the entire document. Typically this is an executive reader who may have some technical background. In every case, the reader is looking for information to help decide whether or not to invest in your product and in your team.

The reader may be an internal executive: A member of your company’s management team (the C-suite executives), the director of a Research and Development (R&D) section, or a cross-functional team of engineering, finance, marketing, purchasing, manufacturing and human resources staff entrusted with in-house start-ups.

Or your reader may be an external executive: A private investor, a member of an investment firm, or a potential partner in bringing your product to market.

When writing for executives, make the Executive Summary a stand-alone section (no references to text or graphics in the report). Some readers will not see the Investor Presentation or read the entire Investor Report – relying instead on just the information in the Executive Summary for decision making. In general, they are in a hurry and will be scanning, so this section must contain all the important parts. The Executive Summary typically runs about 10% of the original document.

What to include: The topic sentence from each major section of the report, along with the thesis statement. Example of a topic sentence about size of market: “Customers for the product include all drivers in the United States, including delivery drivers, truck drivers, bus drivers, and commuters, an estimated 214 million drivers as of 2016.” Other key information is size of market, description of your technology and the problem it solves, and your exit strategy.

What to omit: Graphics, examples, calculations, attributions and credit lines (those appear in the report itself and in the References).

**Writing Tips**

* Replace the Headings and text in the sample with your own Headings and text. These are instructions to help you use the template.
* Use a formal tone: Third person, complete sentences, no casual language, no opinions, no sales hype or exaggerated claims.
* Proofread to help ensure credibility for your report.
* Remember to delete the Tip boxes after you use them.
* When you are done, make sure your final version is clean. Under the Review tab, click the down arrow under “Accept” and then chose “Accept All Changes.”  Then click the “Tracking” button to disable tracked changes. Your final report should be free of any mark-ups or comments.

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**Writing Tips**

* Proofread to ensure that the wording in the T of C matches the **Heads** and Subheads in the text portion of the report.
* Find the T of C feature under References on the Word toolbar.
* Double check – on the Final Draft – that the pages in the T of C are listed correctly (they are not correct here, for instance. Did you notice that? ☺

# **Opportunity**

The purpose of an Investor Reports is to interest potential investors in a product you and your colleagues have developed. The idea is to give enough technical details, market overview and financial projections that potential investors will see your project as having a good chance of succeeding. Your goal is to earn their trust – and their capital (money) – so that you have the funding to continue your project.

You may be competing for funding against other teams in your company’s engineering or R&D department. Or you may be competing with other entrepreneurs approaching the same pool of outside investors. You do not need to describe this for the reader – but you do need to have an idea of your situation before you write.

Also, as you write the Investor Report, review the Investor Presentation that your team prepared throughout the semester. This will form the basis of your Report. Caution: The content and research can be reused, but the tone cannot. Presentations by their very nature are more casual than formal written reports. So be careful to address your funding audience respectfully. You are asking for millions of their dollars to bring your product to market. Be sure to respect their status and need for information to make evidence-based decisions.

As with all reports, you must offer a context for your project. This is the Opportunity section. You start with the Opportunity to show the investor that you are aware of what the market needs versus simply pitching technology that excites you and hoping a market develops later. Below are the subheads and content for your Opportunity section.

**Current Situation**

This is the *Opportunity* (the Problem/Pain/Challenge) slide discussed in detail. Remember that there might be many bottom lines (social, ecological, etc.), but you cannot ignore the bottom line that matters most to managers and investors: Whether they will earn money on their investment (the cash they give you) and when they will start to see a return. Many private investors in particular are reluctant to tie up their money for long periods (five years, for instance). They want a speedy ROI (return on investment) so they can pursue other investment opportunities.

**Business Plan**

This is a brief overview of how you plan to address the opportunity. For instance, you should name your product, describe briefly how it works to solve the problem, how it improves on existing technology, and your plan for developing your technology. This section should be based the Business Plan that your team developed around the middle of March.

Remember: Add a transition to help move the reader from Opportunity (the situation today) to Product Development (your team’s detailed plan for realizing your product).

**Writing Tips**

* Use graphics as much as possible. Executives expect to see and are familiar with graphics such as tables, graphs, flow charts, and so on. **You can pull graphics from your presentation for reuse in the report.**
* Reference the PowerPoint presentation, which is in Appendix 1 of the report, so that the reader knows this extra information is available.
* Write in the third person (not “we” or “our report,” but “the team” and “the team’s report”).
* Use present tense verbs because you are describing decisions and events that are occurring. Ex., “Statistics show that customers interviewed prefer…” The exception is any section that deals with the future, where you will use future tense verbs. Ex., “In the second year, the team will field test the prototype…”

# **Product Development**

This is the section where you present your product development work, including CAD and other models, control algorithms (flowchart), user interface (mock-up, not necessarily a working prototype) and a technology roadmap (namely what needs to be developed and when, if you are to reach the strategic goal listed in the prior section). This should include testing and validation. Refer to your *Technology and Product(s)* slide(s).

Remember: **Re-use the graphics from your presentation.** However, you cannot simply drop graphics into your report. You must introduce them in the text before you show them.

**Product Illustration**

This answers the question: What is your product and what does it look like? How big is it? You can tweak this subhead so that it is more informative for your reader.

Insert your artwork here, along with titles, callouts, keys, and captions. Remember to set off illustrations with white space so they are attractive and accessible to the reader.

**Schematic of How the Product Works**

 This answers the question: How does your product work? This is where you describe – or show – how your product works. You may use text or a flow chart or a timeline or another type of graphic that helps the reader understand the step-by-step function of your product. Remember, you can reuse graphics from your presentation.

**Technology Roadmap**

 This answers the question: What are your plans for bringing your product to market? For this section, reuse the Roadmap you developed for the Investor Presentation. Be sure to include a title and a caption if needed. Your timeline should end with the sale of product #1.

Remember: Add a transition to help move the reader from Product Development to the next section, the market for your technology.

**Graphics Tips**

* Be sure to refer to your graphics in the text. Ex., “As seen in the Technology Roadmap,” If necessary, add a caption that draws the reader’s attention to the point you want to make. Some readers are scanning and may concentrate on graphics and captions.
* Remember: Your primary audience is an executive one. They are not SMEs (subject matter experts). Tailor the amount and level of detail accordingly. Use captions, callouts, and keys to capture key information without cluttering the graphic.

# **Marketing and Sales Plan**

This is a narrative of the information presented in the slides entitled *Customers* and *Market* and should include your customer discovery activities and, if appropriate, the graphics you created.

**Customer Discovery**

Some engineers believe that their job is to invent new technology and then find a market for it. The more successful engineers know that they are problem solvers who respond to a market need by developing new technology that responds to a problem or an opportunity. Your customer discovery activities help persuade the reader that an actual market exists for your technology.

**Size and Growth of Market**

The second part of your customer/market research captures how big the market is, where the customers are, and the indicators for growth over time for the market. This secondary research has to be anchored by time and place in order to be credible. See Writing Tips for more information on sourcing.

**Marketing and Sales Strategy**

You can formalize and then reuse the narrative you developed for your Market slide and may want to tie your sales strategy to what you have learned about different audiences. Ex., Baby Boomers are more likely to read newspapers, while Gen Z will be looking for information online. Remember, you don’t have to present a complete marketing and sales plan. Your goal is to provide an overview that shows investors that you aware of the need to guide your new technology through the marketplace in order to recoup your investors’ money.

Remember: Add a transition to help move the reader from Market to Competitors (who else is operating in your market and how does their technology affect your plans?).

**Writing Tips**

* This course uses American Psychological Association (APA) style. Your instructor may choose to use another style, such as American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) or Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEEE). If so, you must adjust your in-text citations and works cited/references page at the end.
* Be sure to cite the sources for your evidence in the text. Ex., “Approximately 134 million householders in the United States in 2016 reportedly prefer ….” (Smythe)
* The complete citations will be available in Appendix 4: References.
* If you borrow graphics from a third-party, you must acknowledge that in your report. You may add a 10 pt. Source: ABC Company below the graphic. This gives the reader enough information to find the complete citation in References.

# **Competition and Strategic Alliances**

This is a narrative of the information presented in the slides entitled *Competitors* and *Alliances*. You may want to pull some of the graphics and/or narrative from your PowerPoint presentation if they seem appropriate for this section and your investor-reader. Remember, written reports are more formal and more complete than oral presentations, so you’ll need to adjust the tone if you reuse material.

**Competitors**

Competitors refers to those companies already in the marketplace. It’s also a chance to acknowledge existing technology and systems and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. For instance, a competitor for Amazon Pharmaceuticals might be a brick and mortar pharmacy. Strengths might be it is local, open 24/7, and can do same-day prescriptions. Weaknesses might be long wait times and pricing. By acknowledging these features, you have a basis for describing how/when/where your technology performs better.

**Strategic Alliances**

No one can be in business alone. Every entrepreneur and company relies on others to help design, build, ship, and display their products. Allies might be aluminum suppliers or machine shops that build stamping presses or FedEx or a marketing firm. Identifying allies shows your potential investors that you have thought ahead and found others who can help make your venture a success.

Remember: Add a transition to help move the reader from Competition to Operations, etc. (how you’ll set up your company for success both physically and in terms of leadership).

**Writing Tips**

* Be sure to cite the sources for your information about your competitors and allies. Ex., “According to the Archer Daniels Midland webpage entitled “Agri-Drones, ….” (www.adm.com)
* The complete citations will be available in Appendix 4: References.

# **Operations, Management and Staffing Plans**

This is a narrative of the information presented in the slides entitled *Operations and Manufacturing* and *Management Team, Board of Directors and Advisory Board*.

**Operations**

 In Operations, you describe how your company will run. For instance, are you developing an app or building a product? If an app, then your focus will be on recruiting the right talent (app programmers). If building a product, then you’ll need to decide should you build this product yourself? outsource the building and assembly? outsource the building and assemble in-house?

 You’ll also need to think about where your operation will be located, how large it needs to be, the materials or features you will include, and so on. The idea is to persuade the investor that you have thought through the day-to-day activities needed to move your technology from ideation to delivery to a customer.

**Management**

 Typically, the management team is the students who’ve worked on the project. You may give yourselves job titles, but don’t invent biographies for yourselves (it’s never a good idea to make up information). Instead, show the organization chart you developed for your PowerPoint presentation.

 Your Board of Directors and your Advisors add skills and experience to supplement those of the management team. Pull from the PowerPoint presentation to describe who you have identified to help you run the company.

**Staffing Plans**

 Your investors are interested in how many employees you plan to hire and their functions. Since your investors will be paying salaries for the first few years, your job is to run a lean organization that can still get the job done. Show the investor/reader that you have thought about using their resources wisely.

Remember: Add a transition to help move the reader from Operations to Financials and Exit Strategy – show how you’ll use the investors’ money to make more money.

**Writing Tips**

* The Advisory Board members are outsiders who supply expertise that you as a start-up cannot afford to pay. In real life, Advisory Board members receive payment in the form of equity (typically a 2% stake in your company). But you don’t have to factor this payment into your Pro-Forma Financials.

# **Financial Plans and Exit Strategy**

This is a narrative of the information presented in the slide entitled *Financial Plans*. You must include your P*ro-Forma* Profit and Loss Statement (referenced in Appendix 2).

**ROI**

Return on Investment or ROI is the first data point that investors look for. It answers, “When will I get my money back?” Your line graph from your PowerPoint presentation should also give some idea of how much profit the investor will earn.

**Distribution of Funds**

 The pie chart from your PowerPoint presentation will be helpful here, too. It shows how you plan to spend the money provided by your investors. Your narrative should explain the “why” behind the “what” presented in your pie chart. Make sure your reader understands the thinking shown in the apportionment of funds.

**Exit Strategy**

It may seem counter-intuitive, but you need to mention an exit strategy for your partners and investors. They need to know how their money will come back to them. Examples of exit strategies include giving investors a share of the future profits (usually expressed as a percent) or a chance to acquire the product or the patented technology.

Remember: Add a transition to help move the reader from Financials to Summary/Strategic Issues – let your reader know that the story of your product has been told and that now you’re moving into final considerations.

**Writing Tips**

* Be sure to refer to your graphics in the text. Ex., “As seen in Year 1, …” If necessary, add a caption that draws the reader’s attention to the point you want to make.
* Be sure to refer to Appendix 2 in the text so that the reader knows this extra information is available.
* Remember: Your primary audience is an executive one. They make monetary decisions and hope to mitigate risk in their investments. They know that Pro-Forma Financials are your “best guesstimates,” but give them details that show your credibility as inventors /business partners and put their risk into perspective. Tone is critical here. You must be self-assured but respectful. Show that you know what you’re doing and be grateful for the funding opportunity.

# **Summary and Strategic Issues\***

This is a narrative of the information presented in the slides entitled *Summary* and *Strategic Issues*.

**Summary**

As with any conclusion, your job is to recap – briefly – the key points of your report. You probably want to revisit the opportunity, your technology and how it addresses the opportunity, the size of the market for your technology and how your technology compares with your competitors, your plans for producing your technology, your management plans, and your financial plans. Keep your narrative short – they’ve just read the longer sections. Hit the high points, not the details. Ex., why it will work vs. how it will work.

**Strategic Issues**

 This section acknowledges that even a plan as detailed and well-thought-out as yours cannot foresee every eventuality – life happens. The idea is to show that you have considered some “what if’s” and have responses. For example, if fuel prices rise and delivery rates jump, what’s your plan? If a key supplier goes out of business, what will you do? The investors know that you cannot predict every possibility. What they want to know is that you have a realistic idea of the situations that businesses encounter and that you are resilient enough to deal with adversity. After all, it is their money at risk if you cannot manage a set-back.

Try to end on a positive note. Ex., “While we know that setbacks can happen, we have a solid technology and financial plan in place and the experts to help us handle a situation.” Don’t cut and paste this language from this template; create your own statement to avoid plagiarizing.

To get started, return to return to your purposeful thesis statement, which appeared in the Abstract: WHO should do WHAT and WHY. “Archer Daniels Midland (WHO) should invest $xxx million in start-up capital (WHAT) so that AgriDronz can commercialize its artificial pollination drones to secure ADM’s crops and assets.” (WHY) The idea is to close the presentation with WHAT you want from the audience – but also WHAT they’ll be getting from investing in your technology (and you). This is the “ask.”

**\*Plan B**

The audience for your report is your investors or your management team. However, add a section here for your instructors briefly describing your “Plan B” – that is, what your team will do if your initial investor or your management denies your request. For example, if AgriDronz’s initial approach is to Archer Daniels Midland, which turns down the request for funding, who will AgriDronz approach next?

**Writing Tips**

* Your challenge is to balance being confident with being realistic in this section. If you do it right, readers will think you are a good investment risk and likely to return their money with interest.
* Remember, empty claims and over-confidence harm your chances. Your audience is full of smart people experienced in the business world. They have many other opportunities for investment. Your job is to persuade them that your technology start-up is the best place for their money.

# **Appendix 1: Idea Pitch (PowerPoint Notes Pages)**

In this Appendix, you offer readers a chance to experience the presentation you created over the course of the semester.

# **Appendix 2: Pro-Forma Financials**

**Writing Tips**

* Create a .jpeg by saving your final PowerPoint presentation using the Notes Pages options. Insert the .jpeg here.
* DO NOT REWRITE the presentation narrative – that’s been done. This is a chance to repurpose a semester’s worth of work.

Offer readers a short explanation followed by your P and L Statement (the Excel spreadsheet you created).

**Writing Tips**

* Try to keep the P and L Excel table on one page.
* If you cannot, try keeping the narrative (the introduction) on this page and the table on the next.
* If the spread sheet runs to two pages, you may need to split your table between two pages. Try to find a logical break such as a new subheading versus breaking in the middle of a section.

# **Appendix 3: Personal Statements**

##

## **Student 1 (insert your name)**

1. Please state your contribution to this project, namely what did you work on and what have you accomplished?
2. Please give your feedback on the content and structure of the course. What did you like and what would you have done differently? What did you think of the balance between the technology and design content and the business content? Would you recommend to change it to one side or another? Please include any other information, opinions, etc… that you would like to share.
3. Do you plan on developing this idea further in the context of your studies at UDM? Your answer will not affect your grade.

## **Student 2 (insert your name)**

1. Please state your contribution to this project, namely what did you work on and what have you accomplished?
2. Please give your feedback on the content and structure of the course. What did you like and what would you have done differently? What did you think of the balance between the technology and design content and the business content? Would you recommend to change it to one side or another? Please include any other information, opinions, etc… that you would like to share.
3. Do you plan on developing this idea further in the context of your studies at UDM? Your answer will not affect your grade.

## **Student 3 (insert your name)**

1. Please state your contribution to this project, namely what did you work on and what have you accomplished?
2. Please give your feedback on the content and structure of the course. What did you like and what would you have done differently? What did you think of the balance between the technology and design content and the business content? Would you recommend to change it to one side or another? Please include any other information, opinions, etc… that you would like to share.
3. Do you plan on developing this idea further in the context of your studies at UDM? Your answer will not affect your grade.

## **Student 4 (insert your name)**

1. Please state your contribution to this project, namely what did you work on and what have you accomplished?
2. Please give your feedback on the content and structure of the course. What did you like and what would you have done differently? What did you think of the balance between the technology and design content and the business content? Would you recommend to change it to one side or another? Please include any other information, opinions, etc… that you would like to share.
3. Do you plan on developing this idea further in the context of your studies at UDM? Your answer will not affect your grade.

**Writing Tips**

* The instructors read and use the comments you provide here. Please be candid and constructive.
* Consider commenting on lectures, group work, assignment sheets, grading rubrics, templates for report and presentation, in-class coaching and presentations, your overall experience in the class, and whatever else you would like the instructors to know.

# **Appendix 4: References**

Place all sources here and use APA (American Psychological Association) style for your References. If you need help, you will find more samples posted on the course BlackBoard site under Content – Research & Citing Sources.

If you wish, you may create two References lists, one for print and electronic sources and one for graphic sources. Each list will be alphabetized according to APA.

Adams, Z. (2014). Bending of an Infinite Beam on an Elastic Substrate. *ASME J Appl. Mech*., 3,

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Annual Transaction Revenue by 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20171010005945/en/Juniper-Research-Smart-Store-Technologies-Generate-78> Article via a business website.

Say, M. (2017, January 20). Amazon Go Is About Payments, Not Grocery. Retrieved

from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/groupthink/2017/01/20/amazon-go-is-about-payments-not-grocery/#4950fbec67e4> Article via a magazine website.

Statistica.com, (n.d.). Worldwide mobile app revenues in 2015, 2016 and 2020 (in billion

U.S. dollars). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/269025/worldwide-mobile-app-revenue-forecast/> Information via a business website.

**Writing Tips**

* Be sure to edit and proofread your entire report before submitting.
* The rubric for grading the final report is posted on BB.